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A
GREAT
TREASON

MARY HOPPUS

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A GREAT TREASON



A GREAT TREASON

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. . . And some to shame
and everlasting con-
tempt.

New York

MACMILLAN AND CO.

1883

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CONTENTS.

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. The <i>Fair American</i>	1
II. A Fire-eater	9
III. The Course of True Love	20
IV. A Storm in a Tea-cup	27
V. The Mohawks	30
VI. Compliments at Parting	33
VII. Travelling Companions	38
VIII. "I Lack Opportunity"	45
IX. Birds of Ill Omen	48
X. Mountain Roads	56
XI. Some Painful Passages in the Experience of Lieutenant Digby	61
XII. The Boston Port-bill	70
XIII. Lieutenant Digby asks for Leave	74
XIV. Noble Savages	78
XV. "Fruitfulest Virginia"	82
XVI. Armies in the Clouds	85
XVII. Days in Arcadia	89
XVIII. "King Philip is coming !"	96
XIX. "Wolf ! Wolf !"	101
XX. A Sisterly Embrace	106
XXI. An Oration in the Old South	109
XXII. A Lantern in the Old North	112

CHAPTER	PAGE
XXIII. "A Rustic Rout with Calico Frocks and Fowl- ing-pieces"	117
XXIV. A Gentleman from Virginia	121
XXV. Bunker's Hill	124
XXVI. The Sergeant suspects a Plot	131
XXVII. Captain Digby performs an unpleasant Duty	138
XXVIII. Treats of the slamming of a Door	142
XXIX. The Way to Glory	150
XXX. The Blockade of Boston	156
XXXI. Flatbush	165
XXXII. The Old Bell of Independence	174
XXXIII. The Duty of a Christian Man	178
XXXIV. A Painted Rose	183
XXXV. Households divided	188
XXXVI. Mrs. Maverick finds herself in a loyal Neigh- bourhood	193
XXXVII. Confused Noises	203
XXXVIII. The Return from Glory	210
XXXIX. Geek joins Greek	213
XL. A Hapless Lover	217
XLI. A Bold stroke	226
XLII. Philadelphia	234
XLIII. A Man born to command	239
XLIV. General Arnold withdraws his Resignation	246
XLV. Sir John Burgoyne puts on his Armour	251
XLVI. The Relief of Fort Stanwix	256
XLVII. Freeman's Farm	263
XLVIII. Lieutenant Perkins takes a gloomy View of the Situation	267
XLIX. A Reconnoitring Party	272
L. General Arnold does something Rash	278
LI. The day after Saratoga	281

CONTENTS.

vii

CHAPTER	PAGE
LII. A Messenger of Evil Tidings . . .	285
LIII. Captain Digby arrives at Fort Montgomery . .	289
LIV. A Letter from Boston	297
LV. False Alarms	303
LVI. Captain André permits himself to reflect upon his Sovereign	308
LVII. The Mischianza	313
LVIII. A Flash of Light	319
LIX. Althea tears her Ruffle	327
LX. Magnanimity of Captain Digby	339
LXI. An Exchange of Civilities	344
LXII. Valley Forge	354
LXIII. In which Noel tries to make out a Map of the Country	362
LXIV. Hallibut's	370
LXV. Althea astonishes Captain Digby	379
LXVI. Captain André proposes a sure Method with the Rebels	384
LXVII. Dr. Yeldall is called in	390
LXVIII. In which Peggy Shippen is indiscreet . .	399
LXIX. Noel learns that he has a Rival	405
LXX. In which Althea observes that one Rebel is as good as another	412
LXXI. A Dark Hour	414
LXXII. Noel looks back	421
LXXIII. Rude Boreas	427
LXXIV. A Hero's Bride	432
LXXV. Tobias sees the New Year come to Town . .	438
LXXVI. In which Tobias receives a Shock to his Morals	445
LXXVII. On the road to Germantown	455
LXXVIII. A Brother offended	461

CHAPTER	PAGE
LXXIX. Captain Digby in the South . . .	468
LXXX. Pennsylvania <i>v.</i> Governor Arnold . . .	477
LXXXI. A Wounded Name . . .	482
LXXXII. Hair-splitting . . .	485
LXXXIII. Major Digby's Conception of the Point of Honour . . .	489
LXXXIV. In which Major Digby's Imagination runs away with him . . .	499
LXXXV. Important Services of Mr. Joshua H. Smith	504
LXXXVI. His Excellency crosses the Hudson . . .	510
LXXXVII. A Boat to go to the <i>Vulture</i> . . .	514
LXXXVIII. Adventures of Mr. John Anderson . . .	518
LXXXIX. Further Adventures of Mr. John Anderson	522
XC. How John Paulding missed the Pigeon but hit the Crow . . .	527
XCI. An Advantage taken in War . . .	531
XCII. His Excellency is expected to Breakfast . . .	536
XCIII. Treason . . .	542
XCIV. "Remember Nathan Hale!" . . .	546
XCV. The Return of the <i>Vulture</i> . . .	553
XCVI. In the Dead of Night . . .	559
XCVII. A Traitor's Effigy . . .	564
XCVIII. The Only Way . . .	567
XCIX. A Soldier's Death . . .	572
C. Althea surrenders . . .	580
CI. Finis coronat Opus . . .	586
Epilogue . . .	590

A GREAT TREASON.

CHAPTER I.

THE FAIR AMERICAN.

Now, afore heaven, 'tis shame such wrongs are borne.

KING RICHARD II.

"Ef the Lord will, Ma'am, in five minutes more we shall be in Massachusetts Bay."

It was about noon of the 15th of December in the year of grace 1773, and the snow, *Fair American*, Captain Eliphalet Ward, with a cargo of hemp and three passengers, was just off Cape Cod. The low sandhills were half veiled in a light-gray mist, which drifted down with the wind. The Captain declared he could make out Cape Ann; but though the passengers did their best, all they could honestly say they saw was a darker patch on a bank of gray. As the afternoon wore on, a white streak could be seen here and there; the Captain said these were lighthouses, and grinned when Miss Digby compared them to so many statues of Lot's wife.

All the passengers were on deck, and had been there (except when they went below to dinner) since early morning. They were thirty-five days out, and had not seen land for a month, and even a sandbank was worth looking at. So they stood in a little group by the taffrail, straining their eyes, and anxiously watching the wind—a shrewd north-wester, which, as Miss Digby said, seemed to blow thither straight from the North Pole. She said this to a very young man, who was standing next her—as indeed he usually did.

He had a handsome dark face and a shapely figure; and as he turned to reply, there was a mixture of softness and haughtiness observable in his manner, very far removed from provincial rudeness, and even perhaps belonging to an earlier time than the eighteenth century.

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"I am sorry that we must come into port against the wind," he said; "but this inhospitable breeze blows from Boston. You shall be welcomed less roughly if you will visit my native province of Virginia."

"Don't you say nothin' agin Boston, Mr. Branzholm," said the Captain, who was passing. "Boston's the heart and the mouth of the Colonies. She's all real grit, she is,—and you'll see that the wind that blows from Boston will set every weathercock from New Hampshire right away down to Georgia."

"I hope not, Captain," said a tall young man, with very light blue eyes and a fair face, which the cold had only made more ruddy. "I hope the example of disobedience and rebellion to His Gracious Majesty——"

"Disobedience and rebellion, sir?" cried the Captain, his long lean Yankee face all awork. "We want our rights and liberties, sir! Liberties assured to us by a dozen charters! Look you, Lieutenant, some of our fathers fled away hither across the seas from the tyranny of kings and bishops—all of 'em bore the burden and heat of the day. They found this country a wilderness, given over to the cruel and treacherous heathen; they have turned a great part of it into flourishing colonies, even as the garden of the Lord. We *made* this country, sir! And now, shall we tamely sit by and see our commerce cramped and fettered, and our prosperity destroyed, to swell the British revenues? I tell you, Lieutenant Digby, our ruin is meant! They have us every way. First——" here the Captain grew more excited still, and slapped his thigh at each emphatic word, "first, there was the Stamp Act. Then we must pay duty in specie—to drain us of our ready money, and leave us helpless——"

"The money was all to be spent in the defence of the Colony," interrupted the Lieutenant.

"A pretty defence!" cried Eliphalet Ward. "You hindered us defending ourselves, and you sent us a stubborn fool, who stuck fast in the mud till Benjamin Franklin got him out, and was cut to pieces with his army, through his own ignorant folly. Our officers was thrust aside by impudent jackanapes that never saw an Injun in all their born days, and had no more notion how to tackle one nor they had how to treat free Colonists. And the very money that was to pay these mighty defenders was to be shipped off to Britain and back again! Shall I tell ye why, Mr Digby? Because, sir, money's like

honey—ef you let it run thro' a sieve, a lot of it's sure to stick. That's why it was, Mr. Digby. Ef it hadn't of been for that, the troops could ha' been paid right off out o' the duties."

"Well," said young Digby, with a slight swagger—excusable in a very young man, whose courage and obstinacy outweighed his reason—"I don't know all the ins and outs of the case, of course; but I know that 'tis always easy for a few plausible sedition-mongers to make out a story to suit their own ends, and persuade those who wish to believe it that they're monstrous ill-used——"

"Persuade 'em! Make out a story!" cried the Captain. "By heaven, Mr. Digby, this is too much! You say you don't know the ins and outs—no, I rayther reckon as you don't! Do you know, sir, that there's been nine-and-twenty laws made against our New England industries? Air you aware, sir, that we have been forbid to use the waterfalls that God gave us to be used for the service of man? Or to erect machinery? or set up looms? or work wood or iron? Look 'ee here, Leftenant Digby, I'm a-speakin' o' what I *know*—you're a-speakin', by you're own showing, o' what you *think*. My father lived down in Maine, sir," continued the Captain, less angrily, but no whit less earnestly; "and when I was a little chap, no higher nor Miss there's apurn-strings, he's took me by the hand and led me into the forests, and pinte'd out one tree after another with the King's broad arrer on it, rotting away, Mr. Digby, rotting away. There was a hunderd pound fine on whoever touched one o' them 'ere trees with the broad arrer on 'em, sir, an' yet, there warn't one in a hunderd—one in a hunderd!—there warn't one in ten hunderd, as was ever cut down for the King's use! You mark my words, Mr. Digby—the day'll come, sir, an' some o' this generation'll live to see it, when the woodman's axe shall sound on those trees in the forests o' Maine, none darin' to gainsay him. Ah! there's no forests in the world like the forests o' Maine," he said in a much gentler tone, as though the remembrance had touched him deeply. "When I'm at sea, I often fancy I can smell the scent o' the pines, same as I smelt 'em when I was a little chap, and went toddlin' after father."

"I don't suppose though, Captain," said Lieutenant Digby—who had really listened with considerable patience to this rhodomontade of a merchant-skipper, "I don't suppose you seriously mean to say as you could get on without us?"

"Did you never hear talk o' Cape Breton, Mr. Digby?" asked the skipper, putting his arms akimbo, and viewing the stalwart young Englishman with great disdain. "Or o' the first siege o' Louisburg? Did you never hear it said, New England had given peace to Europe? And didn't our Provincial officers go up along o' yourn after Gen'ral Wolfe, when he took Quebec? An' who saved that poor fool Braddock's retreat—such as *was* saved? An' let me tell you, Mr. Digby, ef that there unfort'nit Gen'ral had ha' listened to Colonel Washington, he wouldn't never ha' fell into the trap he did. Don't you let folks deceive you, Mr. Digby—we come o' the same stock as you, we love liberty as well as you, an' ef necessary, we can fight as well as you."

"What do you think about it, Mr. Branzholm?" asked Miss Digby of the young Virginian, turning her fine hazel eyes and arched brows full upon him. "Are you going to turn rebel, and wear homespun?"

"Mr. Branzholm hails from Virginia, Ma'am, and Virginia ain't felt the shoe pinch as we have in New England," said the Captain. "But they didn't like the Stamp Act any better nor what we did." So saying, he went off to give an order to the steersman.

"Well, Mr. Branzholm, what do you say for yourself?" repeated Miss Digby, those beautiful imperious eyes of hers still steadily fixed on the young man's face. He flushed, but replied without hesitation,—

"The men of the Old Dominion, Madam, are as truly loyal as the most loyal Englishman can be. They were never rebels yet."

"And yet I have heard," said Miss Digby with a malicious smile, "that they compounded with Cromwell, and swallowed their loyalty in order to retain their rights and privileges. I fancy the Yankees are not the only colonists who can drive a bargain."

"Madam," said Branzholm, "you are severe. You do not know how hard it is to us, who have ranged in primeval forests, and lived as free as Adam in Paradise—and I think scarce worse tempted by the devil—to put ourselves into the swaddling-clothes of the Old World. For fields, we have whole tracks of country—for meadows, the unhedged Savannahs—for plantations, forests. Our boundaries are great rivers and mountain ranges. My Province of Virginia alone is larger than all England and Wales. We

are so used to have room enough and to spare, that these walls which the mother-country is trying to build around us seem more irksome than they would be to men whose boundaries are mere brooks and fences."

"You never spoke thus before, Mr. Branzholm. You used to be loyal," said the young lady.

"And I am loyal still, Madam. But I confess it, there's a something in the very wind which blows off these shores which smacks of liberty—almost in spite of myself I feel a certain impatience of control taking possession of me; and all those venerable rules and restraints, which seemed to me so admirable in Europe, seem now to be an intolerable bondage. I will show you a Virginian forest, and you'll forgive me."

"Indeed, I hardly know you. In Europe you was all for reverence and loyalty—"

"Madam, if His Majesty will but dismiss these ministers, and confirm to us the rights which his predecessors granted, he will have no subjects more loyal than we. And I still hope for this, in spite of my brother Jasper's fears."

"Ah, Mr. Branzholm," said Miss Digby, raising her sweet clear voice a little, to out-pipe the wind, which was whistling through the shrouds. "Captain Ward said truly that the wind of sedition blows from Boston. Ever since that letter of your brother's, you have been a different person. I protest, 'tis like enchantment! What a fire-eater this brother of yours must be—enough to set the Provinces in a blaze!"

"My brother Jasper is no fire-eater——" began Branzholm eagerly. Then he stopped himself, seemed to hesitate, and said at last, more gravely than Miss Digby thought possible to so lively a temperament,—“My brother Jasper is a man of so thoughtful and philosophic a turn, Miss Digby, so disposed to impartiality—so apt to see that a question hath two sides to it—in short, so extraordinary fearful of forming a hasty or unjust judgement, that I confess his change of mind hath staggered me. I do not yet despair, as he seems to do, of a happy issue; but if he be right, there's but one side I can take."

"I hope that is the side of your King, Mr. Branzholm."

"God forbid I should ever have to choose!" cried Branzholm, a dark flush on his cheek. "But if I must—if I must choose between my country's just rights and liberties, and any other thing in this world soever, why, then, I must needs choose my country!"

Miss Digby looked at him; she was troubled and perplexed, and could think of nothing better to say than,—“But, sure, Mr. Branhholm, you are an Englishman, and England is your country?”

“If England is my grandmother, America is my mother,” he said—and Miss Digby noted that he was almost repeating certain words out of his brother Jasper’s letter, which he had shown her. “I was born here—my lot is cast here; but, besides that, I do believe from my heart that in this matter the Colonies are in the right, and the British ministry is in the wrong.”

“I contend in vain with Mr. Jasper Fleming,” said the young lady in a piqued tone. “But pray, if he be so great a philosopher, so used to weighing a matter, and so slow to pronounce a judgement, what hath of a sudden brought him to so sharp a conclusion?”

“Can you ask, Madam? Those letters of Hutchinson’s and Oliver’s——”

“It was a most unfortunate circumstance that such letters should have been written,”—began the Lieutenant; but Captain Ward, having given his orders, came up at this instant, and interrupted him once more.

“Say, a pity they was discovered, Mr. Digby—I guess that’s nearer what you mean, sir! And I guess the Lords and Commons over to England would like to see Benjamin Franklin’s gray head set up on Temple Bar for the share he had in that there unfort’nit discovery. But, thank the Lord, we know our enemies now!”

“At any rate, Captain Ward, you know that the King is not your enemy,” said Miss Digby, turning to the Captain with an irresistible persuasion in her smile. But before he could reply, a sudden light blazed up from the ship’s side, and was almost immediately answered by another, flashing over the fast-darkening sea, from just below a twinkling paler gleam, which the Captain had told his passengers was the light at the entrance to Boston harbour.

“That’s the signal for the pilot,” said Branhholm. “The entrance is very ticklish—so narrow, that between the two islands two ships can scarce pass abreast; but once inside, the greatest ship may ride safe—ay, and need not heed the fiercest gale; and yet, Miss Digby, such winds and waves beat on these shores, that, could you see the islands among which we must

presently grope our way, you would perceive that all their northern sides are so worn down, they seem like half-islands, and year by year the more exposed of them grow more barren. But on the mainland 'tis fertile enough, though not like Virginia."

"You will allow nothing to be like Virginia, I see, Mr. Branzholm," said the young lady, still with a slight touch of pique in her voice.

"You will forgive my partiality, Madam, when you see Virginia—but hark! what is that? I could swear I heard bells——"

They listened; but though they all agreed that the tolling of a bell seemed to come now and then on the wind, the sound was too inextricably mingled with other sounds of wind and waves—creaking cordage, flapping foresail—now hanging loose, as the ship was put about, to wait for the pilot—the dash of waves under her bows,—and now and then a sea-bird's scream.

"I could swear I heard it booming, and that 'twas the bell of the old Brick Meeting," said Branzholm again. "But however that may be, I do most certainly hear the sound of rowlocks—the pilot is coming off from Lighthouse-Island."

As he spoke, another flare-up lighted the gray mistiness which every moment drew closer and darker around them. The pilot-boat was near enough now for those aboard the snow to see the rowers, and to see also two men sitting in the stern. Then all faded out again, and in that instant night seemed to have settled down upon the sea.

All the passengers hurried to where the Captain stood, a little abaft the waist, giving orders for the ladder to be lowered, and for the ship's head to be kept in the wind's eye.

"Darn yer!" roared the Captain; "can't ye keep her steady? We shall swamp the boat, if ye don't look alive!"

"Ship ahoy!" cried a voice out of the darkness. "What ship?"

"*Fair American*, Eliphalet Ward, from Bristol," shouted the Captain through his speaking-trumpet. "Are you a pilot?"

"Ay, ay," was bellowed back, in tones so stentorian that, as Lieutenant Digby remarked to his sister, this might have been Father Neptune himself, come with a train of Tritons to overhaul the ship's log.

In another minute or so, Father Neptune, if it were he, became visible as a stalwart figure, magnified by the mist into

colossal proportions, looming out of the night, and seeming to be bound like Ulysses to his own mast.

"Haul up the fores'l!" shouted Captain Ward. "Keep her helm down!"

Thus brought-to against the wind, the good ship strained, and groaned, and pitched not a little. But those in the pilot-boat made nothing of scrambling up a ship's side on a dark night; and the pilot was presently on deck, followed by another man, and the rowers were putting back for the lighthouse.

"Ebenezer Gunnell, ain't it?" said the Captain, shaking hands with the pilot—a short thick-set man, now that he was on deck, with a fur cap drawn over his ears. "What cheer, brother?"

"Good cheer, brother—the very best of cheer—liberty, brother!" returned the pilot, in a voice as stout as himself, albeit somewhat hoarse with shouting down the north wind.

"Is that so?" asked the Captain slowly.

"That's so, skipper. Massachusetts has made up her mind, and you bet, that whatever steerin' orders Massachusetts gives, the whole fleet'll foller. We've had nigh on to eight year o' talkin' an' argufyin', an' now we're a-goin' to hev a year or two o' actin' an' doin'. May be less'n eight year'll do for that—actin' don't take nigh so long as talkin'. Sam Adams——" here the speaker broke off suddenly, in obedience to a well-directed kick on the shin from Captain Ward, who observed drily,—

"Think yer can take us in to-night, Ebe? I've got passengers—Lef-tenant Digby, a British officer, and his sister, and young Mr. Branhholm of Virginia—and they're all in an all-fired hurry to see their friends."

The hint contained in this remark checked, as it was intended to do, any further political revelations on the part of Mr. Gunnell, who only said,—

"Wa-al, skipper, I'll try. But Mr. Branhholm needn't wait, *he* needn't, till we get to Boston, to see *his* friends, for one o' the best of 'em's come off with me."

Here the pilot modulated his voice to what might by courtesy be called a marine whisper, in which he said a hoarse word or two in the skipper's ear, and forthwith proceeded to take command of the ship; and for a long time to come he was only to be heard bellowing such brief orders as,—*"Starboard one pint!" "Shift your helm!" "Lay her up closer!" "Brace the yards!"* and so forth.

CHAPTER II.

A FIRE-EATER.

Russell. Let us have done with looking back, I pray,
And hold our faces turned the way we go.

LORD AND LADY RUSSELL.

No sooner had Captain Ward mentioned the name of young Mr. Branhholm, than the person who had hitherto been standing unnoticed behind the pilot (and who, wearing a bear-skin jacket and a sailor's dutch-cap, might well have passed for a pilot's mate) turned hastily, and exclaimed,

"Mr. Branhholm? Where is he?"

"Here!" cried Branhholm, springing forward. "Jasper! my dearest brother, can it be you?"

His arms were round the stranger's neck, and he was receiving a truly bear-like embrace from the wearer of the bear-skin, before he could well get out the words.

"This is luck indeed, or fate—if, indeed, it be not rather Providence," said the new-comer, drawing Branhholm apart from the others. "My dearest boy, I cannot see your face clear enough to know if you are changed, but the voice is still the voice of my brother Noel."

"And the heart is the heart of thy brother, too, dear Jasper," cried the other. "Oh, what happiness to be at home and to touch a kindred hand once again! But how come you here? This is witchcraft, surely!"

"Nay, for I did not know 'twas your ship. I had an errand to-night to the lighthouse, and finding some difficulty about returning, persuaded Gunnell to bring me off with him. We saw you just before sundown, and Gunnell swore you was a Boston ship—I should hardly have cared to find myself aboard a transport."

Jasper said this in a tone between jest and earnest, and then asked more gravely,—

"Who is the British officer? Lieutenant——?"

"Digby. They are people quite out of the common, I assure you, brother," said Noel eagerly. "I met them in England, and by the greatest good fortune was able to make the voyage in the same ship. Lieutenant Digby has lately exchanged into the 29th Foot——"

"Captain Preston's regiment!" interrupted Jasper.

"I daresay he did not choose it for that reason," said Noel, rather testily. "He exchanged because family affairs make it necessary he should visit the Colonies, where he has relations. He is, besides, distantly related to ourselves—that is, the English branch of the Randolphs is connected by marriage with the Digbys. Let me present you, brother; you will, I'm sure, find them as charming as I do. The Lieutenant may have some British prejudices—'tis but natural he should—but he is a fine generous young man, and his sister——"

"Well, what of his sister?" asked Jasper drily, as Noel paused.

"His sister is a young woman whom all men must admire——"

"I seldom admire the women that men run after," said Jasper somewhat curtly.

"Jasper! I protest you are strangely altered, and grown strangely unjust, to judge a woman whose face you have never so much as seen!" cried his brother reproachfully.

"She may be endowed with all the graces and virtues combined, for aught I know, my dear boy," returned Jasper, "but she is certainly not worth my quarrelling with you about her the first hour I see you again after three years. Let her pass. I was never much of a dangler at young women's apron-strings, as you may remember. I have no sweetheart, nor am like to have any, but my mother. Perhaps she has made me hard to please; I have heard 'tis so when sons have uncommon mothers. And for the lady's face, it chanced that I was so fortunate as to see it the instant I set foot on deck—the lantern shone full upon her, which was the reason I did not see instantly a face my eyes desired much more."

"How good you are to me, dear Jasper," said Noel, caressing the furry arm linked in his own. The difference in their ages—though only four or five years—had combined with the difference of their characters to invest the relations between these brothers with peculiar tenderness. Jasper had been accustomed to protect and lead, and Noel, on his side, almost adored.

On the present occasion, however, but little time was given to mere protestations of affection. As soon as Jasper had replied in answer to his brother's questions, that his father and mother had not come to Boston, as they had intended—Colonel Branx-

holm being very uneasy in consequence of a serious Indian scare, and his wife refusing to leave him,—as soon, I say, as these questions had been answered, and Jasper had added that many of the Virginian gentlemen were trying to get Colonel Washington to organise the defence, as he had done before—he glanced round, to make sure they were not overheard, and said in his brother's ear, grasping his arm more firmly as he spoke ; “Noel, the die will be cast to-morrow. Which side do you take ?”

The Enchanter's Mirror, wherein the inquirer saw reflected the vision of the future, is but a fanciful statement of a very common experience. There is perhaps no one—how prosaic and unimaginative soever—who has not known this lifting of the veil, and found himself on a sudden, as it were, besieged by the future—hemmed in, pressed hard, by a thousand things—people, events, long spaces of years, idle fancies, inevitable results—all crowding in on him in wild confusion, but all real. At the instant that Jasper put his question, “Which side do you take ?” it seemed to Noel that a vast and terrible panorama unrolled itself before his eyes, as clear as the view from the Blue Ridge of his own Virginia, which he knew so well. He had heard the words, “Rights of the Colonies,” “Charters,” “Resistance,” spoken in all the varying tones of remonstrance, contempt, and indignation, by friend and foe, on the American Continent and in England, for eight long years ; but never before this moment had the words fallen on his ear like drops of molten fire. Now, in one never-to-be-forgotten instant, he realised that they might mean smoking towns and wasted fields, friends and neighbours arrayed against each other, life-long friendships broken and perhaps quenched in blood, and love that might-have-been, turned to irreconcilable enmity. All these terrible possibilities sprang suddenly into probabilities, nay, into certainties, as Jasper said—“to-morrow.”

To-morrow, Noel, you must decide. From henceforth you have done with mere opinion and theory. Here are the cross-roads. Which will you take ? You believe that your country's cause is morally and legally just, and most of the best men you know think so too. Justice and law, and the manifest interests of the Colonies are on one side. On the other, there is nothing to be urged but to your country the risk of failure—and to yourself the loss of a woman whose love you dream of gaining, and to whom you must to-morrow seem a rebel, unless to your own conscience you are content to be a recreant this night !

All this, and much more, was in Jasper's question, and Noel knew it.

"No, no!" he cried—so loud that Miss Digby heard him as she was going down the companion-ladder into the cabin. "I must stand by my country, come what may!"

"Thank God!" said Jasper, relaxing the iron grip he had kept of his brother's arm, and seeming almost overcome for an instant. "You made me tremble, Noel. I feared——"

"What, brother?"

"Perhaps I should not say it—but this is a quarrel which will set house against house, brother against brother. Count the cost, Noel, for once embarked in it there can be no drawing back but with dishonour! I feared for you just now, because—'twas but an instant's glimpse—but I saw that Miss Digby has a pair of fine eyes—such eyes as they say can draw a man from his duty and make a traitor of him against his will."

"I never saw such eyes!" said Noel, his hot young Virginian blood all aflame at this praise of his mistress, "not even in Virginia! A man might be content to die, to win a tear, or even a smile from them; but be sure, brother Jasper, they shall never make a traitor of me. Althea Digby might hate a rebel, but she would scorn a traitor."

Neither of the brothers spoke for some minutes. The ship was safe past the narrows, and was threading her way among the innumerable islands. The wind had shifted, and they were making good way.

"Come below," said Jasper, suddenly turning from the gunwale, against which he had been leaning—lost, it seemed, in thought. "Come below. We shall be private, I suppose, in the cabin? I have much to tell you, and little time to tell it in."

Down in the cabin, by the light of a hanging oil-lamp, Jasper produced several letters and newspapers—the *Boston Evening Post*, the *Massachusetts Spy*, the *Boston Gazette*, and others. As Noel hastily ran his eye over them, he was astounded at the signs he everywhere found of the determination to resist. It was already known, even in England, that the ladies of several of the States had agreed to wear only articles of native manufacture,—in order to at once encourage trade on the Continent and disappoint the British revenue-officers. But the duty on tea was the centre of attack. From first to last of this unhappy contest, nothing is more sadly con-

spicuous than the persistent refusal of the British Government to so much as try to understand the situation. American Independence is a monument to all ages of that British pigheadedness, that unreasoning prejudice, on which we pride ourselves still, despite International Exhibitions and Cook's Tours.

Before the old French War, the Colonists looked to England as their mother and defender. But for England, they believed, they would be overrun by the French or devoured by the Indians. But we took good care to disabuse them of this belief. Braddock's disaster was but the first in a long course of lessons, wherein the Colonists learned that they had better, *and that they could*, protect themselves. We followed up many military blunders by the grand political one of slighting the Provincial officers. Those "Provincial buskins," whom poor Braddock sneered at for presuming to teach a British General how to fight, were as sensitive as the nicest British officer—incredible and incomprehensible as this appeared to the said British officers. Nay, that very Provincial buskin whose warnings Braddock rejected, said, on a certain memorable occasion, of which this narrative will speak more hereafter, that the profession of a soldier was "the chastest of all."

Having thus laid the fire, the British Government, by the hand of Charles Townshend (who seized the opportunity when his great chief was down with the gout), proceeded to set light to it. The Stamp Act, as every one knows, was an ignominious failure—it was at once outwitted and defied. Every one of those unused stamps was as a fiery spark falling among gunpowder—or rather, as a seed of thistle-down, carried by the winds of heaven, and springing up in hatred and resistance wherever it fell. The tax itself was repealed, but the obnoxious principle was maintained—the right to impose new taxes without any compensating privileges, and in contravention of the Charters. The free Colonists saw themselves suddenly placed on an inequality with the rest of their fellow-subjects—those very fellow-subjects who were always singing,

"Britons never shall be slaves!"

The Colonists were for the most part of the same indomitable British blood, and should *they* be slaves?

"Never!" cried all these papers and letters which Jasper was showing his brother. "We stand out for the principle;

what is the use of telling us that these teas are to be sold cheaper here than they are in England? The duty on them is the symbol of rights we do not acknowledge—the thin end of the wedge of a whole system of oppression—and we will never pay it!” This was the burden of all that Noel read—of the ladies’ meeting, at which they all promised to drink no tea—and of those great meetings in Fanueil Hall, at which it was discussed how to prevent the landing of these “detested teas,” now lying unshipped in Boston harbour.

Even the tradesmen openly espoused the popular side. Cyrus Baldwin, the grocer on Cornhill, in advertising some choice Bohea and Souchong (to be sold at eighteen shillings a pound, lawful money), was careful to add that “the above was imported before any of the East India Company’s teas arrived.” And the people of Newport went so far as to declare that any one who should give more than four-and-sixpence a pound, lawful money, for the best Bohea, “should be deemed an enemy to *this country*.”

Any disaffection to the cause brought down prompt and unpleasant notice. Some one had written to the *Evening Post*, to say that certain shopkeepers in Boston, “finding that tea is likely to be expunged from our dietetic alphabet, have raised their coffee two or three coppers per pound,” and to suggest that tar and feathers may be “a constitutional encouragement for such eminent patriotism.”

In the midst of this, Captain Ward came down to drink a parting glass with his passengers. The Lieutenant was with him, and Noel introduced his brother, who bowed somewhat stiffly. Just then Miss Digby came from the inner cabin. It did not escape Noel that she was paler than usual, and a wild hope sprang up in him that she perhaps regretted that the voyage was over. “Allow me, Miss Digby, to present my brother, Mr. Jasper Fleming, of Boston,” he said. “He is not quite in trim to-night for the company of ladies, but we are all travellers, and can make allowance for travelling-gear.”

While Noel was speaking, Jasper had taken off the great pilot’s-cap, which he had not hitherto removed, and was bowing to the lady. The light was very indifferent, being furnished by the smoky lamp which swung from the ceiling, but it sufficed to show Miss Digby a young man of perhaps five or six-and-twenty, tall and apparently rather slender, though the bear-skin left this point uncertain. His face was somewhat too

long for symmetry, and his features were rather strong than regular. Jasper was wont to say that his nose was crooked, and would sometimes complain that this circumstance spoiled his beauty. The nose in question was long but not ill-formed, and if it had a slight twist in its direction, this was but just enough to impart a half-critical, half-humorous expression to a countenance which might otherwise have been rather stern. But there was no sternness in Jasper's eyes. They might have been the eyes of a woman—they were gray, clear, and limpid, and expressed every mood of their owner's soul. They would have redeemed much homelier features than his. Apart from the eyes, the face was strong and thoughtful; but the eyes could make it seem anything—they could flame with indignation, and gleam with contempt, and soften into indescribable tenderness when Jasper looked on little children—who seemed to know that he loved them, for they would always go to him and twine their small fingers round his. His hair—a light brown, with no curl in it—was to-night neither powdered nor covered by the tie-wig then usually worn by gentlemen, and which was extremely becoming to Jasper's rather fair complexion. He was altogether seen to great disadvantage; but even beside the richer colouring and more regular features of his half-brother, Miss Digby was compelled to own to herself that he had an interesting countenance, and could not be dismissed as a provincial boor. Even in that rough dress he appeared unmistakably a gentleman, and he had the same beautiful hands which Althea had often admired in his brother, but more nervous and sensitive. His manners, too, had nothing unpolished about them, and a certain simplicity which distinguished them, made them appear rather the expression of innate good breeding than the artificial result of training.

Jasper had not spoken, but his silence struck Althea as the silence of a man who *will* not speak. She was piqued, and resolved that this fire-eating brother of Mr. Branzholm's *should* speak. She had already conceived a violent dislike to him; but her dislike was combined with a restless anxiety to convince him that she was not the woman he took her for—for Althea had overheard the warning which Jasper had addressed to his brother, and had been deeply incensed thereby.

"We are infinitely indebted to your brother, Mr. Fleming," she said, raising those fine hazel eyes to his face (and finding it

curiously difficult to keep them fixed there); "he has wonderfully enlivened the tedium of the voyage; and has besides pleaded the cause of the malcontents with such eloquence, that he has made me wish more earnestly than ever that all these unhappy misunderstandings may quickly be adjusted to everybody's satisfaction." Jasper bowed again.

"You cannot wish it more earnestly, Madam, than we all do," he said. Without having the Captain's Yankee twang, there was just enough peculiarity in the quality and intonation of his voice to give it novelty in Miss Digby's ears—and novelty is always interesting.

"I am glad to hear you say so, Mr. Fleming," she replied, smiling. "I was afraid I should find you quite a rebel."

"If we are ever rebels, 'twill be because we are made so," said Jasper quickly.

There was a hint of defiance in his tone—or so, at least, the Lieutenant fancied, and he bristled instantly, like a true-born Briton.

"In that case you would not be rebels long!" he cried, the blood mantling in his fair face; "if it came to that, we should make short work of you!"

Lieutenant Digby was heartily ashamed as soon as he had uttered this bravado—not that he doubted for an instant the irresistibility of the British arms, but he felt that his ardour was juvenile, and he had a painful consciousness of being very young, and a huge desire to appear manly and self-possessed. He, too, had from the moment of beholding him conceived a violent antagonism to Jasper Fleming, and he did not love him the better for having been the cause of his making a fool of himself, by taking the thing so much in earnest.

Jasper merely looked at him (Digby fancied his eyes twinkled, and became still more wrathful), and said quietly; "I hope, Mr. Digby, for both our sakes, that it never will come to that."

Jasper did not reciprocate Digby's dislike. He was rather taken with the young fellow—the Lieutenant was the same age as Noel, but looked much more boyish—Jasper thought he had a good ingenuous countenance, and, for Noel's sake, did not wish to quarrel with him.

"Well, of course," said Digby, with a superhuman attempt at lofty indifference, "'taint likely as it ever should."

"I fear our misunderstandings go too deep to be as easily

adjusted as Miss Digby hopes," observed Jasper. "But I trust in God they will never come to so terrible an issue as you, sir, hint at. That would be a misfortune second only to the one which now threatens us."

Jasper spoke with perfect self-possession and courtesy, but also with a calm conviction which made the young officer still more ashamed of having been betrayed into so boyish a bluster. He was much relieved when Captain Ward broke in, by saying in his most pronounced Yankee drawl,—

"Wa-al, friends, seems like as it's most time the vy'ge was over, since our tempers seems to kinder want re-fitt'n. Hows' ever, we've had a happy an' prosp'rous vy'ge, an' I'll give ye a toast afore we part. May neither we nor any one else ever be sorry as this here vy'ge was made!"

The Captain nodded all round, and solemnly drank off half a glass of toddy, while the others pledged him back in the measures which he had been hospitably mixing for them.

Miss Digby took up the glass which the Captain had pushed over to her, and just touching it with her lips, said,—

"I shall propose one more toast—Good luck to Captain Ward and the *Fair American*, and may he carry a better cargo next voyage!"

"Thank ye, Ma'am," returned the Captain. "That'll be as the Lord wills, and as times turns out. But it strikes me as it'll be a long while afore a Boston ship carries any more tea into Boston harbour," he added to Jasper, when his passengers had gone to get their packages together.

And Jasper replied, in a very meaning tone, "I think so too."

As the ship approached the wharf, her progress was very slow. The shipping which lay at the different wharves could be dimly traced in the darkness, by the lights which swung here and there in their rigging; and even in the darkness the masts could be seen rising like little forests—so thick lay the vessels. It was reckoned that on Long Wharf alone fifty ships could unlade at once. As the calendar gave a moon, the lamps were not lighted in the town, and the line of King Street, leading up from Long Wharf, could be only imperfectly traced by a few lamps belonging to private houses.

Noel pointed out to Miss Digby as much as could be seen.

"The State House is at the top of the street," he said; "the house you are going to is a handsome red-brick mansion

half-way up King Street, and Uncle Fleming's house is just opposite."

Now that the parting moment was at hand, Noel was aware of a painful depression. In a few moments more, the delightful familiarity and nearness of the voyage would be over. For five weeks he had not only seen Miss Digby every day, but no one else had seen her—no one, that is, except Captain Ward, and the crew, and the lady's own brother. Whereas, in Boston, it would be as much as he could decently venture, to call once a week or so, and to contrive to meet her now and then on the Pier—the liveliness of which as a public promenade he had several times casually mentioned. And she would be surrounded, to a dead certainty, by every young and middle-aged jackanapes of a King's officer in Boston. This prospect had appeared sufficiently dismal a few days ago,—but Noel would now have been thankful for it. For the news which Jasper had brought rendered it necessary that he should immediately set out for Virginia—since even love must be content to wait, if there were any fear of an Indian outbreak. Noel had been explaining this to Miss Digby, and had said as much as he dared of the disappointment it would be to him to leave Boston, just when he most wished to remain there.

"But I hope soon to return," he said. "If Colonel Washington will but take the thing in hand, we shall soon put them down. He is well used to Indian ways, both in peace and war, and has dealt with them in embassy and conflict from his youth up."

"You seem to think a great deal of this Colonel Washington," observed Miss Digby, who had not quite recovered her temper. "I have heard of him, even in England; I think 'twas he that they said bore a charmed life, having escaped unhurt from the very thick of poor General Braddock's affair."

"It was, Madam; and if any one can defend our borders against the Indians, 'tis he."

"I see you are determined to lose no chance of chanting the praises of a Virginian, Mr. Branhholm," said Althea, relenting, "and that you do not think the Indians the harmless, ill-used creatures which some in England maintain they are."

"Madam, they are for the most part bloody-minded savages—treacherous, greedy, and revengeful—incapable of civilisation, and rejoicing in cruelty. I would kill my mother with my own hand sooner than leave her alive to suffer their devilish ingenuity!"

Althea shuddered; but she thought—"Though he is but a boy, there is stuff in him too."

"Yet I think you told me that you have a drop of their blood in your own veins," she said, a little maliciously.

"The blood of Pocahontas need not shame the purest descent," he said, hotly; and then, in an altered tone, he continued: "And yet, princess and heroine though she was, I have sometimes thought that 'twere better perhaps not to come of her race, by so much as one drop of blood. For I sometimes fancy I can feel that drop, like a drop of fire, boiling in the very core of my heart, and stirring a mad fierceness within me—'tis a kind of tingling in my veins, beyond the power of reason to control,—an impatience—I scarce know what it is, but I know that 'tis a something, which if it were ever fairly roused, might play the devil with all the rest of me."

"And has your brother likewise this fierce drop of heathen blood?" asked Miss Digby quietly.

"Jasper? To say the truth, Miss Digby, I think he has; but in him it lies deeper down—at the very bottom of his heart, it seems to me—but yet I think 'tis there. But I have it in double measure, for my father and mother are cousins, and both come of Pocahontas' line."

"At any rate, we need not fear your taking to the woods and turning Sachem," said Althea; "but I protest you have made me tingle with this talk of Indian blood, and I am almost glad that our English branch of the Randolphs can count no Indian princesses among their ancestry."

Late as it was when they cast anchor at the wharf, there were plenty of people about. As soon as the usual shouting, running hither and thither, flinging of ropes, hauling of chains, and all the confused turmoil which attends coming into port, had partially subsided, the Customs stepped aboard, and were taken down into the Captain's cabin. Before the Captain, however, could follow them down the companion, an elderly gentleman in a full-bottomed wig and a scarlet cloak hurried after him, and said fussily,

"A thousand pardons, Captain, but you should have as passengers Lieutenant Digby and Miss Digby—pray present me to them. I am sent by their relative, my cousin, Mrs. Maverick, to meet them. You know my name—Mr. Harrison Gray."

The Captain very slightly returned Mr. Gray's bow, and hastily looking round, espied the two persons he was seeking

standing amidst a heap of trunks and boxes, which some negro porters had fetched from below.

"Here they are," he said. "Miss Digby, Ma'am, this gentleman is Mr. Harrison Gray, come to escort you ashore. I have the honour, Sir and Ma'am, to wish you good-bye."

He shook hands heartily with them, and disappeared down the companion; while the old gentleman, removing his cocked hat, bowed with great formality, and explained that Mrs. Maverick had begged him to meet her young cousins at the ship, and bring them to her house.

Jasper and Noel, who were at the moment coming up to take leave, and ask if they could be of any service, heard this; and Jasper, as soon as they had set foot ashore, said bitterly,—

"You can see already which way the wind will blow from that quarter, Noel. Mrs. Maverick is a connection of Mr. Hutchinson's, and a Tory of Tories; and Harrison Gray is one of those that blow hot and cold on the cause, as long as 'tis only debated, but will go over the instant we do more than talk."

So saying, Jasper turned up King Street, towards the house of his uncle, Mr. Lawrence Fleming.

CHAPTER III.

THE COURSE OF TRUE LOVE.

THE house to which Jasper took his brother was one of the fine old brick mansions which formerly lined King Street. The door was opened by a coloured footman, who displayed every tooth in his head when Noel addressed him as Telemachus, and told him he was a head taller than when he last saw him.

A solid oak staircase in the middle of the entrance-hall led to the rooms on the first floor, which opened on to a landing itself as large as a good-sized room. Telemachus showed the way across this landing, and flung open a door. The room into which he ushered the gentlemen would have been gloomy, but for the sense of homely comfort conveyed by the close-drawn curtains, the bright wood fire, and the table laid for supper. Here the family were assembled, consisting of an elderly lady and gentleman, and a young girl. Noel was received with open arms by them all, including his pretty cousin Mary,—for so Noel

always called the young lady, though she did not actually stand in that relation to him. "Come, come, give him a kiss, my wench," said her father; and Mary obeyed with a charming blush, which brought a second and warmer glow to the impressionable young Virginian's cheek.

Jasper's uncle and adoptive father was a little man of sixty or so, with a face plain enough by nature not to be much the worse for the smallpox, of which it bore the marks. His small gray eyes were remarkably quick and merry, and his expression was that of shrewd good-humour. He wore a plain suit of gray and a tie-wig, and was particular about his stockings, having a remarkably neat leg, and a well-turned foot and ankle. His wife was a somewhat comely woman, with sandy hair, inclining to red. She was dressed with extreme plainness, as befitted a member of one of the strictest churches in Boston; and wore a close linen cap, and, whenever she went out, a camlet riding-hood, such as pious folk liked to recall was worn in the good old times by even the Governor's lady. Good Mistress Fleming was of a somewhat despondent disposition, and was wont to talk of herself as one with whom the Lord had dealt mysteriously. If by this the good woman had meant the death of her only son, a promising boy of twelve, every father's and mother's heart might sympathise with her; but she had a way of giving an abstract theological turn to any expressions of human affection in which she might indulge, which to the purely human mind savoured somewhat of coldness.

Her daughter, however, made up for all her parents' deficiencies, whether of mind or person. She was a very beautiful young woman, of a style of beauty which appeals most forcibly to refined observers, but which could not fail to please any eye. She was tall, and in middle age would probably be what it was then the fashion to call a "monstrous fine figure of a woman." But at nineteen the suppleness of youth was chiefly apparent. There was a largeness of her movements, too, which seemed in some subtle way to suggest largeness and generosity in all the thoughts, words, and ways of Mary Fleming.

Noel, who since his travels possessed the advantage of having seen a good many admirable pictures, found an indescribable pleasure in watching his cousin as she moved about the room, putting the finishing touches to the supper-table; and the thought occurred to him more than once, that, with a child clasped to her bosom, she might well have sat for that very

ideal of tenderness and purity, which painters strove to embody in the Maiden of Nazareth. That blessed figure has become the type of womanhood; and it was Mary Fleming's womanliness which made her chief charm. There was a sweet bloom on her cheek, her brow was white and smooth, and shaded by hair of a warm light brown, which looked almost golden when the sun shone on it; her blue eyes were like two clear pools, as clear as Mary's own soul; but agreeable as all these things may be to the sight, Mary had a stronger and subtler charm still for the heart of every one with whom she came in contact. She was incapable of flirting or coquetry; she had no little feminine arts, no manoeuvres or pretty affectations. But in all she said and did there was apparent this warm large-hearted womanliness—and all women are no more womanly than all men are manly.

Noel always thought and spoke of Mary as his cousin, but there was in reality no blood-relationship between them. Noel's father and mother were cousins. They came of an old Virginian stock, and were, as he had told Miss Digby, related to the Randolphs, one of those old Virginian families which boasted that the blood of Pocahontas flowed in their veins. There was certainly a wild strain in them, which showed itself now and then in some passionate outburst. These two cousins had fallen in love with each other in spite, or in consequence of, a violent feud between their fathers, which rendered stolen meetings necessary. Stolen meetings by moonlight quicken most lovers' ardour; and these lovers made love by the light of the broad yellow moon of a Virginian summer night, flooding the crannies and crevices of the distant Blue Ridge, and the fir-trees which grow high up on its shoulders.

They had pledged unalterable fidelity a good many times under this moon, when the lady's father found out what was going on, and (after sending a message to his brother-in-law to chain up Young Hopeful, if he would not have him shot for trespassing) carried his daughter off to Philadelphia, where she was seen and admired by Mr. Jasper Fleming, a prosperous merchant of Boston. It unfortunately happened that the paternal interference took place at the very moment of a quarrel between the lovers. Myra Butler had taken it into her head to be jealous of a young beauty and heiress, who was reported to look very kindly on Mr. Branhholm. So when further reports reached Philadelphia of an actual engagement, Miss Myra became convinced that her suspicions had been only

too well grounded, and she despatched a letter to her lover, in which she begged him to forget any promise she might ever have made him, kindly assuring him of her own entire forgetfulness of any promises on his part. Miss Myra, being a high-spirited young lady, contrived to write a very cutting letter. Meanwhile (some said that Mr. Butler could have explained how) Mr. Branzholm had heard such an account of the attentions of Mr. Fleming as enabled him to explain Myra's letter in a manner in the highest degree unsatisfactory to his feelings as her lover. Not to be behindhand in spirit, he also wrote a letter, the gist of which was that he entirely coincided with the sentiments expressed in the lady's epistle. As though this were not insulting enough, he added incidentally that Miss Myra was greatly regretted throughout the county, and that Miss Euphemia never failed to inquire most particularly after her. Now Miss Euphemia was the beautiful and wealthy young heiress who had been at the bottom of the quarrel. When Myra came to that part of the letter, she tore it into a thousand pieces, and accepted Mr. Fleming that very evening.

Mr. Fleming was three-and-thirty, and Miss Butler was seventeen. He was a plain straightforward man, very much in love, and aware that he had a rival. But his rival was a boy of twenty, and Fleming was more amused at his audacity than jealous of the impression he had made upon Myra. The marriage was hastened, and Mr. Fleming brought his wife home to much such another substantial sober-minded house as the one in which Noel was at this moment watching Mary, and dreaming of Althea.

In those days stage-wagons were few, posts were slow, and it was a very long way from Boston to the heart of Virginia. Long after the days of which this story tells, prayers were offered in the meeting-house in Norwich for a man "gone, going, or about to go" on a journey to Boston—so much longer were the miles in ante-railway days. Mrs. Fleming therefore did not hear for many and many a month after her marriage that the evil reports had been false, and that rage and jealousy alone had prompted her lover's letter. When she did learn it, she had been three months a widow. Her husband died of an attack of suppressed smallpox, and she was left with a baby six months old. She returned to her father's house, to find that the old heart-burnings were raging as hotly as ever—so hotly indeed, that Mr. Branzholm senior, whose *Montague* was no

whit behind Mr. Butler's *Capulet*, had taken legal proceedings against her father. The real quarrel was as old as their lives, and had been inherited along with a disputed boundary; but it was perpetually assuming new phases, and as soon as Myra's marriage removed one grievance, another had been supplied by the untimely, and it was said suspicious, death of a valuable game-cock,—a bird much cultivated by fine old Virginian gentlemen before the Revolution.

In those good old days, if every man was not his own lawyer, any man could easily obtain a license to practise as legal agent for his neighbours. That venerable title, *Justice of the Peace*, was of a very wide significance, and, like charity, covered a multitude of incongruities. Possibly owing to this somewhat amateur administration of the laws, the verdict in *Butler v. Branhholm, in the matter of a game-cock*, went against the plaintiff. Mr. Butler's indignation at this miscarriage of justice was so excessive that, being a man of a full habit, and given to generous living, he had a fit of apoplexy in the court-house, and died three days after.

By Mr. Butler's death his estate devolved upon his son, a good-natured young man, who had always thought it a great pity to keep up an old quarrel. His sister, too, had fallen into a deep melancholy, ever since she had learned the truth about Edward Branhholm. So he took an opportunity of saying to persons who would be sure to repeat his words, that, for his part, he had no quarrel with young Mr. Branhholm, and never had had any; and that he thought it a great piece of folly for sons to perpetuate their father's differences—a man's own quarrels, he added, were usually as much as he could attend to properly, without raking up things that happened before he was born. The long and the short of all which was that Mrs. Fleming married Mr. Branhholm, after a decent interval of mourning.

Mr. Branhholm was not unkind to little Jasper, but in his heart he felt towards him somewhat as Sarah felt towards Ishmael; and this feeling was not diminished by the death of the first child that his wife bore him. Jasper's presence became much more tolerable when Mr. Branhholm had a son of his own, although Jasper was to him, for many a long year, "that Yankee fellow's son," and a reminder of circumstances which he would gladly have forgotten.

To Mrs. Branhholm, the part of her life spent in Boston seemed like a dream. Her first husband was a shrewd man of

business, with so sufficient a confidence in himself that he had no misgivings about the Virginian lover he had supplanted. He did not even pay his wife the compliment of being jealous—it was a boy-and-girl affair, such as we all have in our youth, and think our hearts are broken; but a good husband will soon drive all such nonsense out of a girl's head. This was Mr. Fleming's reasoning; and so long as Myra believed she had been betrayed, pride almost benumbed the sense of misery. But she was a true Virginian, and Boston seemed a prison to her. She hated the climate, the way of life, the manners of the people. Accustomed to the careless freedom of Virginia, to its open-handed hospitality and luxurious idleness, she chafed at the grim piety and plodding industry of New England. The "seriousness" irked her; the hard-headed arguments on knotty points of theology or law bored her inexpressibly; the interminable sermons and prayers, which decency required she should listen to on Sundays, made her life a burden; but she had esteemed Mr. Fleming, and she always mentioned him with respect, and was a most loving mother to Jasper.

Mr. Branzholm, however, felt it to be a relief when, after the death of Lawrence Fleming's only son, Jasper began to be much in Boston. Mr. Fleming was a merchant and shipowner, and he had hoped that Jasper would take his father's place in the business. But it soon became evident that he would never be content to be only a merchant. His father's property had always remained invested in the business, and as he grew up he intermeddled to some extent in its administration; but he chose the law as his profession, and had already pleaded with success in many causes. In those primitive times the union of a professional with a commercial calling was not unusual—though, to say the truth, Jasper's commercial labours were pretty much confined to listening to his uncle's confidential communications, and making occasional suggestions, which Mr. Fleming usually adopted. When there was a ship to be built, however, Jasper's love for mechanical science made him take a more prominent part. On such occasions his uncle would sometimes lament that Jasper's attention had been diverted to the law; but Mrs. Fleming, whose piety never blinded her worldly wisdom, thought this a short-sighted view, for was it not pretty certain that Jasper would one day be a judge, and have the right to prefix the title *Honourable* to his name?

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The little party gathered around Mr. Fleming's hospitable table were in high spirits that night—even Mrs. Fleming allowed herself to be carried away. Noel was asked so many questions about England, that he could hardly get any answers to his own questions about affairs at home. What was London like? Had he seen the King and Queen? Was the Pantheon very magnificent? Had he ever seen Lord Chatham or Mr. Burke? And the rebels' heads on Temple Bar? How did he like Bath, and was there not a monstrous deal of fashion there?

Noel was able to return a satisfactory reply to these and other similar questions—particularly the one about Bath, on which he had so much to say, that Mrs. Fleming feared he had become worldly-minded—a fear, however, which did not in the least check the tide of her questions.

"You have wrote us such admirable lively descriptions of all you've seen, Noel," said Jasper, when the traveller at length paused in his tale, "that we feel almost as if we'd been with you. I wonder if I'm right in one thing I thought you conveyed? I mean that, though there's a much greater splendour, and the great world seems always close at hand, yet there's less room—if I may say so—a something more confined, more trammelled than here. I can't but fancy our thoughts are more our own—that in England a man is more content to think other men's thoughts."

"There's something in what you say, brother," replied Noel. "Their manners are more elegant, more finished; they seem to walk with more mincing steps, as you might say—but the effect is very elegant, and there's a deal of vigour in 'em underneath it all; though 'tis now become the mode to affect a languor and indifference in one's manner, and a man of fashion is half-ashamed to be caught in a sober mood. We are more homely, and, I fancy, more contented. And our air is lighter, our skies are clearer. I thought I never felt so refreshing a wind as that which blew so unkindly in our teeth to-day."

"That, dear boy, was because you knew you was coming home," said Jasper. "'Twas a detestable wind in itself, and had very near prevented my getting back to-night. How little did I imagine 'twas your ship I was looking at! Well, I trust at any rate the fine gentlemen at home have not made you ashamed of our colonial simplicity."

"There's not all that difference as you might imagine, brother," said Noel. "That coat of yours is a very fair cut—very fair, indeed. 'Twould scarce be remarked in the Mall—'tis a trifle too plain for Bath, perhaps; but I remember that the sober lover in a play I saw there had on one very much like it. 'Twas, if I remember right, rather more of a plum. But really, brother, your coat's not amiss."

"I'm infinitely obliged to you and the tailor in Cheapside who made it," says Jasper, laughing. "Yes, 'twas made in England. I detest an ill-cut coat almost as much as I do loose-held opinions; so as my uncle's tailor could not be persuaded but the fault was in my figure, I sent to London, in the hope of convincing him 'twas in his scissors. I'm disappointed, though, that you think 'tis only fit for the virtuous lover, who, I suppose, is the fool of the play?"

"By no means, brother, 'twas a very moral play, and the villain received his deserts," said Noel. "I'm sure I said 'twas uncommon neat," he added, observing Jasper more critically. "How I wish you had been with me! 'Twas a great pity you didn't come. You would, I'm sure, have richly enjoyed it; especially hearing the wits and politicians talk. I was taken to St. James's Coffee-House and the Cocoa-Tree, and I can tell you I heard some good things. 'Tis said some of the wits prepare their impromptus, but if they do, they've certainly a very artful way of concealing it."

CHAPTER IV.

A STORM IN A TEA-CUP.

This quarrel will drink blood another day.

FIRST PART OF KING HENRY VI.

A DRIZZLING rain had fallen all day, and the brief December afternoon closed in early. The vast assembly gathered in the Old South saw each other's faces growing dimmer and dimmer as they sat waiting for Quaker Rotch, the owner of the *Dartmouth*, to return from demanding a pass for his ship.

The adjourned meeting has sat nearly all day, and Rotch has already been on one fruitless errand to the collector. This is the position; the *Dartmouth*, laden with the East India

Company's tea, has now been twenty days in harbour, and the moment midnight strikes the revenue officers will be legally entitled to seize her, and land her cargo at Castle William. If the tea is once landed, it will be impossible to prevent its being sold; and once sold, a precedent will be established for the taxation against which the Colonies have been protesting for eight years.

There have before now been riots and disturbances in Boston—notably, the destruction of Governor Hutchinson's house, eight years ago, in the first fury excited by the Stamp Act. Many invaluable manuscripts and collections relating to the early history of the Colonies thus perished. But this was the work of a mob, and all mobs are much alike, whether in Paris or Boston; they differ in degree, but not in kind. The seven thousand men who now sit waiting for Rotch to come back are of different metal—the Governor's Councillors said this to each other, as they watched them pouring past the doors of the Province House—from whose walls the portraits of Endicott, Bradstreet, and Winthrop, frown on Governor Hutchinson.

To this great meeting Jasper Fleming took his brother. Noel saw there many men whose names were banded about like shuttlecocks by party battledores in England.

In the Old South pulpit stood a little knot of men—prominent among them, one tall figure with long gray hair and a lofty forehead. "Who is that?" asked Noel; and his brother replied,—“That is Sam Adams.” “What! the Great Incendiary as they call him? Why, he looks a mere dreamer!” said Noel, surprised.

From time to time some one addresses the meeting—which reminds Noel of a sea with a heavy ground-swell running. As such a sea, when a wind passes over it, rises for a moment into higher waves, so does the great assembly respond to the speakers. But its prevailing attitude is one of expectation. There are moments of stillness so deep that the rain is heard driving against the windows. One of these silences is broken by a speaker in the east gallery. He is a young man, and as the waning light falls on him through a window, there is an ill-boding hectic on his cheek, and his eyes have a feverish gleam. He reminds them that shouts and hosannahs will not end that day's trials, nor popular resolves and acclamations vanquish their foes. “Let us consider the issue!” And he is answered that they have counted the cost, and that now their hands are

to the plough there shall be no looking back ; and the whole assembly vote that, come what will, the tea shall not be landed.

It is five o'clock. Here and there a few candles have been lighted, and by their misty flicker little groups of faces can be seen—some pale, all grimly waiting. The young man in the east gallery speaks again, still harping on the necessity of more than mere words. A voice from the floor warns "the young gentleman in the gallery" of the consequences of this intemperate language, and Noel recognises the full-bottomed wig of Mr. Harrison Gray. "If the old gentleman on the floor intends by his warning to the young gentleman in the gallery, to utter only a friendly voice in the spirit of paternal advice," retorts Mr. Josiah Quincy (for it is he), "I thank him. If his object be to terrify, I despise him. To that God who rides on the whirlwind and directs the storm I commend my country !"

It has been agreed to have patience one hour more. It is a very long hour. The meeting is growing restless ; the buzz of voices rises and falls like the first low rumblings of a storm. Now and then, messengers from without force a way up the aisles through the close-packed crowd. Rotch is a long time gone ; but he had to go to Milton, whither Mr. Hutchinson has betaken himself to be out of the way. A rumour has spread somehow that Rotch's mission has failed. If the Governor will but grant the pass, there are plenty of strong arms ready to work the tea-ships down the harbour, and start them off for London, with their cargoes safe and sound, long before midnight. But without a pass, they will be stopped by the guns of Castle William—and, as Rotch said before he started on his errand, he is loth to stand the shot of 32-pounders. There is a growing impression that Hutchinson will refuse—and what then ? "Why, then," cries Rowe (who is part-owner of one of the ships), "who knows how tea will mingle with salt water ?"

Suddenly, Jasper whispers to Noel, "I must speak ! If I cannot get back to you, we shall meet at home to-night !" and is lost in the crowd, and sooner than seems possible, reappears in the east gallery.

"Fellow-citizens !" he cries, his voice reaching every corner of the great church—while an odd sensation comes over Noel, as though his brother were suddenly changed into some one he has never known—"we are most of us of British ancestry, and our forefathers were rocked in English cradles. But the child cannot always remain a child. He grows at last too large for his

cradle, and the hour comes when he can no longer even abide leading-strings. What should we say of a father who sought to confine his grown-up son's limbs in swaddling-clothes? Fellow-citizens, we are come to our majority—let us assert our manhood! We can no longer be under tutelage. A man, when he is come to man's estate, knows what is good for him better than the kindest parent can do—when that parent is three thousand miles away. Our reasonable demands appear unreasonable to politicians beyond the sea—our thoughts, it may be, are as much wider than theirs as this vast continent is greater than that little island! Some of our fathers played the man in England against the Stuart kings. Their spirits will rise to rebuke us, if we choose now to be slaves. Remember the beginnings of these Colonies of New England—planted in cold and famine and tempest, and much tribulation—reared in hardship and danger! Are we to be denied the heritage of Englishmen, because we are not shut within those narrow four seas of Britain—because we dared plant a new world in the wilderness? These Colonies were planted in God's name—He will not forsake them now, if we do our part as our fathers did theirs. The resources of America are inexhaustible. What shall hinder us from spreading from Ocean to Ocean, from the Gulf to the uttermost parts of the North? what, but the vexatious and tyrannical restrictions of the British ministry at home and its creatures here—restrictions first thought of because we were growing too prosperous! The time for talking is past—the time for action is come. This very night we must choose, or be slaves for ever!”

CHAPTER V.

THE MOHAWKS.

Do you prize your muck above your liberties?

THE BONDMAN.

A DEEP hum of applause rose up from the vast assembly as Jasper ended, but his words had moved them almost too tremendously—each man there saw his own purpose larger than he had ever seen it before, and the greatness of the issue at stake moved him to awe rather than to defiance.

But there was little time for the full effect of the speech to

be felt. A subdued tumult outside communicated itself to the meeting within, and in an instant every man in the assembly knew that Rotch had returned. The excitement was intense; it showed itself in a sudden silence. More candles had been lighted by this time, but the great church was dim and shadowy in spite of them, and only the group in the pulpit could be distinctly seen. As Noel caught sight thus of Samuel Adams's face, and saw the flashing of his blue eyes, he understood why Hutchinson feared him.

There was a rustling, as of the trees of a forest, as the whole assembly rose to its feet, while Rotch and the two gentlemen who had accompanied him as witnesses made their way up the long aisle. They looked harassed and excited; their clothes were disordered with the hasty journeys of the day, and still more by struggling through the crowd; and yet it seemed but a moment before they had reached the table in front of the pulpit, and, amidst breathless silence, were giving an account of their embassy.

"Governor Hutchinson refuses to grant a pass for the ship before the tea has cleared the customs."

A low sound, between a groan and a sigh, broke from the listeners; and then Samuel Adams, as president of the meeting, put a resolution that Rotch's conduct had been satisfactory,—and, amidst smothered sounds of tumult from the galleries (which mingled with other sounds outside), added solemnly,—“This meeting can do no more to save the country,” and dissolved the assembly, with an injunction to observe law and order. Just then, a wild Indian whoop was heard in the street without, answered by others from the galleries.

“Boston harbour a tea-pot to-night!” shouted some one in the gallery, and a storm of hoots answered him. And amid cries of “Hurrah for Griffin's Wharf!” the whole assembly poured out of the Old South, and, mingling with the multitude outside, hurried down the streets leading to the southern wharves.

Noel knew that something was intended, but the hints which Jasper had thrown out had been vague, and had amounted to little more than repeated assurances that the tea would never be landed. Noel looked anxiously for his brother, but he was not surprised at having missed him in so vast a concourse. The crowds were now strangely silent—so silent that Noel hesitated at asking any questions of a grave elderly man who had kept up with him ever since they left the Old South. But as they

turned into Pearl Street, he saw, some way in advance, what seemed to be a troop of Indians, just turning the corner on to the wharf. "Who are they?" he asked his companion. "The Mohawks," replied the other, quickening his pace.

The rain had ceased, the clouds had partially cleared away, and the moon was shining on wharves and warehouses, store-sheds and house-fronts, as they came out in sight of the water, on which here and there the moonlight glistened. But all eyes were instantly fixed on the tea-ships. The Mohawks were already boarding them, and as Noel set his foot on the wharf, he was stopped by a young man who was acting as sentinel. A watch had been stationed, and no one was allowed to pass.

Noel stood watching the fantastic figures leaping over coils of rope, or climbing the short ladders which hung from the vessels' sides. All Boston seemed to be looking on, so black were the shores and wharves with people; but the silence was so profound that the splash could be distinctly heard, as package after package was thrown overboard. As Noel stood watching, and almost wondering if he were awake, and the scene a reality, an arm was slipped into his, and Jasper said in his ear,—

"This was the only way, and now it is too late to go back."

Noel did not answer; he was thinking that at this very hour the night before, he had stood beside Althea Digby, and that this night's work opened a great gulf between her and himself. But he was young and sanguine, and he told himself that the storm might yet blow over, and that he might yet return from Virginia to better fortune.

Jasper, too, was silent, except when, as happened several times, some one came up and spoke to him in so low a voice that Noel found it easy not to hear what he was evidently not intended to listen to. But from a word or two spoken a little louder than the rest he could not help perceiving that Jasper was in the confidence of the leaders, if indeed he were not one of them. "Whatever we do, let the strict letter of the law be observed, so far as is compatible with the great object,"—he heard Jasper say. Just as Jasper spoke, there seemed to be a sudden scuffle aboard the *Dartmouth*, which quickly resolved itself into three or four of the Mohawks dragging a man along the deck, and handing him over to some of the volunteer watchmen, by whom he was roughly handled. A person who came and spoke to Jasper shortly afterwards, said that the fellow had been caught secreting some of the tea.

"Hark!" said Jasper, gripping Noel's arm, as one heavy splash after another announced that the work of destruction was being carried on with zeal. "Every splash we hear tells of another chain wrenched off the limbs of freemen, and cast into the depths of the sea!"

"Jasper," whispered Noel, "do you think there will be fighting after this?" And Jasper, after a moment's pause, whispered: "It must come to that at last, unless *they* yield, for *we* never shall."

The moon shone from an unclouded sky before the work was finished, and the multitudes began to stream homeward. A vast bodyguard surrounded the Mohawks, and escorted them back through the town. They marched to the fife and drum, and people were looking from most of the windows. At one house, a gentleman in the dress of a naval officer called out from a first-floor window,—“Well, boys, you’ve had a fine pleasant evening for your Indian caper—but remember, there’ll be the fiddler to pay yet!”—“Never mind that, Admiral!” shouted he who seemed to be the leader. “If you’ll just come out here, we’ll settle the bill in two minutes, Mr. Montague!”

But Admiral Montague shut the window in a hurry, as the people shouted, and the fifer struck up. The day of reckoning was postponed.

CHAPTER VI.

COMPLIMENTS AT PARTING.

THE next day Noel, with a somewhat heavy heart, went to call on his late fellow-travellers, and take leave before starting for Virginia. As Mrs. Maverick lived almost opposite, Noel had obtained a glimpse of Miss Digby already. Mary Fleming, watering the flowers on her *jardinière*, which stood in the sitting-room window, had also seen a handsome young lady, standing but half-concealed by the muslin curtains, and looking up and down the street.

It had been a bitter disappointment to Noel that his father and mother had not been able to come to Boston as had been arranged. Although Mrs. Branhholm did not love Boston for its own sake, she was always willing to accept her brother-in-law's invitations to spend a few weeks in his house in King

D

Street. She liked travelling; and when one went to Boston one could always visit Philadelphia on the way. Mrs. Branhholm was considered, even in Virginia, as a lady of great spirit, and quite a travelled person. Then, too, but for these most inopportune disturbances, Noel reflected that nothing would have been easier than to get his father and mother to invite the Digbys to visit them at Oglethorpe next summer.

With this idea in his head, Noel lifted the great brass knocker, where copious floral wreaths surrounded a grinning masque, and asked a smart black boy (who in his scarlet coat much resembled a monkey) if Miss Digby were within—having seen Miss Digby approach the window not five minutes before, this question was a pure matter of form. The black boy forthwith ushered Mr. Branhholm upstairs, where he was received by Mrs. Maverick, a very handsome old lady, with courtly manners, befitting the cousin of the Governor.

"I am delighted to see you, Mr. Branhholm," she said. "I knew your mother when she was Mrs. Fleming, and I must compliment you on your resemblance to her. I always thought her out of place in Boston, between you and me, Mr. Branhholm," continued the old lady with a delightful frankness, and fixing her bright eyes and beautiful snow-white curls on Noel's blushing countenance. "Mr. Fleming was a very excellent man, and a great deal more personable than his brother, of course—but yet—you understand me, I'm sure, there's a *je ne sais quaw*"—so she pronounced it—"about a real Virginian gentleman, that one sees at once. I assure you I have been quite grieved to see the part your brother, Mr. Jasper, has taken in these unfortunate squabbles——"

"Madam," said Noel, getting very hot, but feeling that the words must out, "'tis true I am of Virginia, but on these matters we think the same in Virginia as they do here in Boston."

"Oh, fie, fie!" said the old lady, patting his hand, which lay on the arm of his chair, with her own pretty plump fingers. "Fie, fie! We must have no treason talked here!"

Just then, Althea entered. She had found time to unpack a charming taffety morning-dress, and her hair was arranged more elaborately than had been possible on board ship. She was very gracious in her manner, but she could not resist the temptation to say, "Are you not sorry, Mr. Branhholm, that the *Fair American* did not make the voyage in time for

you to have engaged in this pretty little piece of piracy? But perhaps you *did* take part in it?"

"You are mistaken, Madam," said Noel, nettled, he could scarcely tell why.

"Perhaps at least you looked on?" she continued; and then, as he said nothing, she added, "and, like Saul of Tarsus, held the garments of those who were employed in the good work?"

"I had not the honour, or privilege, or anything else you may choose to call it, Madam, to take any part whatever," said Noel quickly. "Allow me, however, to assure you, that should a proper time ever arrive when I may seal my convictions with my actions, I will find a way to do it at which it shall be impossible for any one to sneer."

Althea saw that her words had cut deeper than she intended; but her brother coming in just then, and greeting Noel with unsuspecting friendliness, there was no opportunity for explanation,—if, indeed, any explanation would not have made matters worse,—and Noel went away angry, while Althea felt more interest in him than she had ever done before. A little injustice on the one side, and just indignation on the other, are the best means in the world to give a spice to friendship—especially when that friendship is between a man and a woman.

But whatever was wanting in the parting of Noel and Althea was made up for by the warmth of that between the two young men. Frederick Digby told Noel that they might yet meet in Virginia; for it appeared that the eccentric great-uncle—who had, by his Will, left a large property to the young relatives he had never seen—had died in that province. "You must come and stay in Shenandoah Valley," said Noel,—his eyes involuntarily straying towards Althea to see how she took this. "But I shall write to you, and you to me. We are sticklers for cousinship in Virginia, and you will find plenty of relations."

For all this, it was an uncomfortable parting—so much so that Noel recrossed the street and mounted the stairs of Mr. Fleming's house in a very dejected frame of mind. It was growing dusk, and Mary, who had just drawn the curtains, would have rung for candles, but Noel said,—*"Sit down, Mary, and let us have half an hour's conversation, before I go home to be scalped by Indians, or roasted alive at a stake."*

"Pray do not say such things even in jest, dear Noel," exclaimed Mary, sitting bolt upright in the easy-chair, usually occupied by her father. "Think how terrible they will be to remember when you are gone!"

"It would make no difference to you, nor do I think there is a soul on earth who would care, save my father and mother—and Jasper. My father and mother will probably have perished before I am taken prisoner—of course I should fight desperately"—observed Noel parenthetically, and stealing a sly glance at Mary, to see whether this picture affected her sufficiently; "so that there would only be Jasper left to shed a tear over my ashes."

"Why are you so bitter-hearted, Noel? One would think you was sorry to come home!"

"I have dreamed of coming a hundred times—thought of it night and day," said Noel, staring into the fire, and seeing Althea's face in it, with an Indian just behind her, tomahawk in hand. "But, I know not how, I feel a depression I can't shake off——" here Althea and the Indian collapsed into a wild boar, rooting beneath a tree. "The prospect of a long and solitary journey in the dead of winter, and in a stage-coach as stifling as a ship's cabin, and that tosses nearly as much——"

"Poor boy, it is pretty hard, when you thought you would find your father and mother here, and spend the winter in Boston!" Mary laid a caressing hand on Noel's arm, and Noel slipped down on the rug, and laid his head on Mary's knee.

"You used to let me do this when I was a little boy, and your mother wasn't in the room," he said. "I wish I was a little boy again, and you was my sister, as we used to play."

Now, to tell the truth, in those not so very remote days, the play proceeded quite as often on another plot, namely, the betrothal and marriage, by canonical rites, of Noel and Mary, who, together with Jasper, had on one occasion been whipped and sent to bed, for taking part in a profane travesty of the marriage-service—Jasper, arrayed in his mother's black bombazine petticoat, with paper bands, representing the worthy pastor of the First Church.

Mary's memory, as it chanced, had just then gone back to this particular performance, and she felt an odd vexation at hearing Noel's lament for that other less exciting youthful drama. A silence fell upon her, and she was even conscious of

a disposition to cry. The folly of this, as there was nothing whatever to cry about (Noel's tragic forebodings being in the highest degree unlikely to be fulfilled), so forcibly commended itself to Mary's common sense, that she made an impatient movement with her knee.

"Sit still, Mary," said Noel, whom this movement incommoded. "You never used to try and push me away."

"You are talking foolishly, Noel, and you know it," said Mary, who could at the moment have boxed her young relative's ears or kissed him, with about equal satisfaction. "We are all greatly disappointed that you must go, and you know that well."

It is a striking example of the exceeding deceitfulness of the human heart, that a young man of so good a natural disposition as Noel Branhholm should have at this moment conceived the idea that it would be an excellent plan to have Mary at Oglethorpe when the Digbys were there.

"She's a fine girl, too," considered this youthful Macchiavelli, "and it might bring other people to their senses, to see that some people can——" here Noel went off into a reverie, comparing Althea's manner towards himself with Mary's, and trying to draw some conclusion therefrom. He was roused from this by Mary's questioning him about England, and he had not half finished his account of his adventures, when an elderly woman-servant, attended by Telemachus, came in to prepare the table for the evening meal.

At that meal, Mrs. Fleming gave the conversation a somewhat lugubrious turn, speaking much of the disturbed times, of wars and rumours of wars, and especially of the violence of the heathen, of which latter danger she spoke as though the Branhholms were about to face another King Philip's War. For all which had happened, or was about to happen, the good lady doubted not that Antinomian heresies were mainly to blame. In fact, her opinion of the "ill-egg of toleration" might have satisfied Dr. Cotton Mather himself. Her husband (who was shrewdly suspected of laxity) confined his own speech to a few disjointed remarks of a political tendency. "There'll be trouble, Noel, my lad," he said more than once. "After last night, something'll have to be done o' both sides. Well, we shall see, we shall see! Jasper here was very cast-down a while ago, with thinking how things might turn out; and now I feel kind o' downcast myself. It seems to me as though

what was done last night was a kind of fixing a lightning-rod, same as Benjamin Franklin did ; and now we've just got to bide and see what the lightning'll do."

These remarks, which were not delivered consecutively, as here reported, but at various times, and without much apparent connection with the general conversation, did not contribute to raise Noel's spirits before his departure. In fact they damped him so much—although Jasper reminded him that Dr. Franklin had survived his daring experiment—that he began to take some comfort from the thought that a brush with the Seneca or Delaware Indians would, after all, be exciting, and might afford immediate opportunities of distinction. Colonel Washington was but nineteen when he was adjutant-general. To be sure, such another emergency was not likely to arise. The conquest of Canada had pretty well silenced the French ; and, except for a sudden raid, the Indians could be easily disposed of by men that knew how to fight them.

Noel's dreams that night were of leading an expedition through the wilderness, in which past and present, Captain Joucaire, Braddock, and Indian Sachems, were mixed up in chaotic confusion with Althea Digby and her brother, Mary and Jasper.

CHAPTER VII.

TRAVELLING COMPANIONS.

Mowbray. There is a thing within my bosom tells me
That no conditions of our peace can stand.

SECOND PART OF KING HENRY IV.

As the outside places were all taken, Noel was obliged to make a fourth inside the stage, which was said, in highly figurative language, to "run" between Boston and Providence. That famous transatlantic word "progress" had not yet been formally promoted from noun to verb, but no other word so fitly describes the action of the respectable vehicle in question. Not even the partiality of its proprietor called it a "Flying Machine," as its sister of New York was fondly named. Run it did not ; to the impatient spirit of Noel Branzholm it scarcely seemed even to walk. It did, however, "progress." It was a high-shouldered, top-heavy concern, almost as sub-

stantial as a house, as was needed for the roads of a hundred years ago. The first emotion of the inexperienced stranger, on getting inside, was surprise, mingled with disappointment, at the smallness of the space which it took so much woodwork to enclose. In revenge for this, there was a prodigious amount of room on the roof—or, if not precisely on the roof, around and about the roof. In fact, the outsiders spread out before and behind in such fashion that, seen through a fog at a distance, the coach and its appendages might have been taken by some benighted Indian, last of the Narragansetts or Pocanokets, for the grandfather of all the bull-flies.

Mr. Fleming and Jasper accompanied Noel to the coach, where he was agreeably surprised to find also Lieutenant Digby, who exchanged a very stiff bow with Jasper. There was a deal of handing up of parcels, throwing up of carpet-bags, and hauling up of portmanteaus; as the outsides climbed up to their perches, the coach lurched and groaned like a ship weighing anchor, and the final start was a surgical operation, so many jerks and tugs were necessary to get the wheels to fairly begin to turn. Once off, however, the four stout horses seemed to pick up their load, and the unwieldy machine lumbered over Boston Neck, and away through the green winter landscape and along the busy street of Roxbury, past the old *George* tavern, and so out into the country again.

Long before this, Noel's attention had been drawn to two of his fellow-passengers; the third, wrapped in a travel-stained camlet cloak, and his hat slouched low over his eyes, was either asleep, or wished to indulge in his own thoughts undisturbed. This person sat next to Noel on the back-seat, and turned away from his companion.

The other two passengers were evidently divines, as was shown by their dress, and also by the cast of their countenances, much as they differed in personal appearance. The elder of the two, a man of sixty or thereabouts, had a placid, somewhat self-satisfied expression; Noel thought he recognised him as the pastor of a church in Boston who used to visit at Mrs. Fleming's house. He was grown stouter, and his hair, which he wore in its natural state, was now of a beautiful silver white, instead of being black as Noel remembered it; but the voice was unchanged—measured and slightly pompous; it had fixed itself indelibly on Noel's memory, and now called up visions of hot afternoons when he had been compelled to sit still on a

foot-stool and listen to the Doctor's well-balanced periods, while Mrs. Fleming gave occasional sighs of acquiescence. The Doctor's face was rather heavy, and his eyes were small; but, in spite of these defects, and a portentous double chin, he had a venerable and scholarly appearance.

His neighbour on the back-seat was at least a score of years younger, and in appearance far less comfortable than the Doctor. His clothes, too, though respectable, looked rather shabby beside the Doctor's fine broadcloth. His features were irregular and strongly marked, one eyebrow was slightly higher than the other, and he had a nervous trick of twitching it. He wore his hair (a sandy brown) long, which, as it was scanty and uncurled, gave him a slovenly appearance, while at the same time it heightened the quaint old-world look of the features. He was a restless man, evidently of a highly nervous temperament, and frequently changed his position—constantly hitching and unhitching an inordinate pair of legs, being, no doubt, much cramped. In so doing, he accidentally kicked the Doctor's most sensitive corn.

"Oh dear! oh dear!" exclaimed the Doctor, freely displaying his anguish. His companion apologising handsomely, a conversation ensued, at first very friendly, until some expression let fall by the younger divine hit another of the Doctor's corns, but this time a spiritual one. Orthodoxy took instant alarm.

"Christian liberty is not Christian license,"—he began, clearing his throat by way of preparing for action.

"Most true," said the other. "But the interference of the civil magistrate in matters of doctrine is an unwarrantable usurpation, whether it be done by a King of England or a Selectman of Boston; and I rejoice to think that we live in times when such persecution as even this province hath seen and committed is impossible."

"Sir!" exclaimed the Doctor, in whose face the blood of pious indignation had been mounting throughout this speech, "*I* on the contrary lament that the days are past, when our godly forefathers could drive away false doctrines, as they drove away Roger Williams and Anne Hutchinson."

"Roger Williams was a man in advance of his age," retorted the other, warming in his turn. "He had a clear view of the glorious doctrine of toleration."

"A doctrine, sir, destructive of orthodox religion, and the

fruitful mother of every form of heresy," said the doctor sternly.

"Then, my dear sir, how do you maintain your ground against the Church of Rome?" demanded the younger man, with a mild air of triumph. "You have no *locus standi*—positively none—if you once deny the right of private judgment."

"No *locus standi*, sir!" cried the Doctor—who, by the way, had usurped by far the greater part of the *locus sedendi*. "No *locus standi*! The Church of Rome, sir, sets tradition above Scripture. *We* take the Scriptures for our sole guide. The Scripture, sir, is our *locus standi*—it is our rock, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it!"

Having hurled this sentence (which formed part of the peroration of one of his finest discourses) bodily at his antagonist, he paused to observe the effect.

"That is the very point," said the younger man quickly. "Good men differ as to the interpretation of Scripture——"

"Sir," said the Doctor severely, ruffling his plumes; "I have observed that when men begin to talk of differing interpretations, they have always gotten an interpretation of their own ready, to clap on some plain word of Scripture. In other words, sir, 'tis ever your heretic who talks most of toleration."

As the Doctor said this, his looks added that he more than suspected that here was a case in point. Then, as his companion did not answer for a moment, he asked pointedly,

"Are you of Providence, sir?"

"I am, sir."

"Ah," observed the Doctor, slowly shaking his head, and crossing his hands on the top of his gold-headed cane, "I might have supposed so."

Being somewhat sharply requested to explain this remark, the Doctor made further reference to Roger Williams and his heresies, and at last, in the heat of controversy, went so far as to call his opponent an Antinomian; to which the other retorted that at any rate he was not a persecutor, and added,—"I confess to holding one heretical opinion—I do not love the Lord Brethren any better than the Lord Bishops."

After this, war may be said to have been openly declared. The respective representatives of Massachusetts and Rhode Island, taking up arms each for his native Province, hurled

theological and historical stones at each other with a hearty good-will, worthy of those more zealous days so much regretted by the Boston divine. He reviled the first founders of Providence as heady, fantastic, and blasphemous heretics, given to contention, splitters of the Church of God, deniers of lawful authority, and lastly as Anabaptists and Antinomians—adding that he doubted not but the late lamentable betrayal of the land that bore him by Governor Hutchinson was to be regarded as in some sense the outcome of the errors of that unhappy gentlewoman, whose great-grandson he was. To this the other replied with much warmth, that Anne Hutchinson was a woman of whom the world was not worthy; that the tyranny of the Massachusetts theocracy was worse than that of the Star-chamber; that Church Covenants were human inventions; and finally, that there was no Divine Right save the divine right of following the light that is in us, without regard to any priest of any communion whatsoever.

If the words "Antinomian" and "Anabaptist" had visibly ruffled the philosophy of the Providence divine, he of Boston was so incensed at these assertions, and especially at the word "priest," that there is no saying to what extremity the belligerents might not have gone, if the coach had not been by this time crossing the Providence River. A fine winter sunset lighted up the tree-clad hills, and glorified the smoke of the town into a warm dusky orange mist.

The third passenger, who had given signs of restlessness for the last hour or so, now suddenly threw off his cloak, pushed his hat to the top of his head, and, stretching himself, thrust his head out of the coach window,—which he had opened without asking permission. Presently he drew in his head, fastened the window, so as to let in a little air, and again stretched himself vigorously. Indeed, all his movements had such a vigour and readiness, that although he had not spoken a single word during a journey of several hours, Noel had for some time felt a greater interest and curiosity with regard to him than he would have believed possible on the day when he was leaving his heart behind him.

The person who had thus impressed Noel was dressed like a substantial merchant, but there was something about him which led Noel to speculate as to his calling, and to incline to think that he might be a sea-captain. He was a stout-built man, and appeared to be extremely muscular. His complexion

was very dark, and somewhat high-coloured, but his eyes were a light gray. His features were good, with an aquiline nose, boldly marked eyebrows, and a lofty but slightly-retreating forehead. As Noel studied his profile, the expression of the well-shaped mouth, with the lower lip projecting a little beyond the upper, was that of a man who is attentively listening, indeed, but who has already made up his mind as to what he himself shall say, and intends to say it, the instant he shall see a favourable opportunity. Noel fancied that the stranger's lip curled with contemptuous amusement, as he listened to the controversy raging opposite him.

When the coach had lumbered down the street of Providence, and drawn up before the door of the posting-tavern, Noel was not sorry to see his reverend fellow-passengers walk off in opposite directions—but not until the Doctor had said with great solemnity,—“Sir, it is on my conscience to bid you most seriously consider whether that light whereof you speak as a man's only guide to heaven be a safe guide, or whether it be not rather—as appears but too probable from the monstrous vagaries into which for the most part they fall who follow it—whether, I say, it be not rather of the nature of those wandering stars spoken of by the Apostle Jude, so that each man hath his own *ignis-fatuus* leading him to destruction. Sir, I wish you a good-day.”

With these words, the Doctor made a bow more in accordance with Christian courtesy than could have been expected from the utterer of so uncivil a speech, and turning on his heel went up the street, like a ship in full sail—his ample person and heavy footsteps making no little impression on a few bystanders, who had lounged up to see the coach come in; while his fellow-traveller, his cloak flapping loosely in the wind, hurried off down town, with long jerking strides.

“Thank Heaven, they're gone!” said the merchant, getting out of the coach. Then having waited till Noel had followed him, he said with a slight bow,—“Do you stay here the night, sir? Have you any objection to our joining tables?”

“None whatever, sir,” answered Noel, who as a very young man was not insensible to the flattery of notice from an elder one.

Not that the stranger was old, however. Being rather heavily built, Noel had taken him at first to be nearly forty, but when they were in the inn parlour, and the merchant had

thrown off his cloak, and was walking up and down the room, the elasticity and vigour of his figure became apparent—he could be but very little over thirty.

“Well, sir, I daresay you and I can find something better to talk about than theological quibbles,” he said; he was pacing vigorously up and down as though he were walking a deck, with a sharp measured stride. “You, I presume, was in Boston on Thursday night? How do you think the matter will end?”

“Who can tell?” answered Noel. “I can see but two possible ends.”

“And they?” The stranger had paused in his march, and put this question in the brusque tone of command.

“One is, the reduction of the Colonies to be mere plantations, as they were at first—places of banishment at the worst, and at the best, of refuge.”

“Ha!” exclaimed the other, drawing in his breath. “I see you understand. And the other end?”

“The only other end—as it seems to me—is, sooner or later—it may be a long time first——”

“Well? what is it?” impatiently interrupted the stranger, his dark face intently waiting Noel’s reply.

“An appeal to arms.”

The stranger brought his hand down on the table, with a force which set the glasses jingling.

“It will come! it must come!” he said, and would have said more, but the host came in at the moment, bringing the dinner, and a couple of jorums of flip, which would, he explained, have been served to the gentlemen before, if the poker had not happened to fall out of the fire, and been allowed to get cold.

The stranger drank off about three parts of the portion offered to him, and asked the host if he had got any Madeira in the house.

“Wa-al, doctor, we aint gotten no Madeiry to speak of, jes’ this minute,” he replied, looking with much curiosity at Noel. “But we’ve gotten some reel good Teneriffe.”

“Very well, bring us some,” said the stranger; and then turning to Noel, added, “Will you carve?”

“Certainly not,” said Noel, smiling.

“Why—what are you laughing at?” asked the other, promptly taking the head of the table, and beginning to sharpen the carving knife.

"I was smiling, sir, to think how much more fit you evidently are to lead, and I to follow," replied Noel. This seemed mightily to amuse the stranger.

"What do you think about it, Ezekiel?" he said, as the host was filling the glasses with the Teneriffe.

Ezekiel grinned.

"Wa-al, doctor, I guess you wa'n't cut out for much less'n *second* fiddle," he said. "Leastways, I b'lieve they think so over to New Haven."

CHAPTER VIII.

"I LACK OPPORTUNITY."

NOEL had ample time to improve his new acquaintance, for he was obliged to stay in Providence over Sunday. Aware of the greater latitudinarianism which was a tradition of Rhode Island, he had hoped to be able to push on; but the landlord informed him that nothing would go out of the town till Monday. So Noel went dutifully to meeting in the morning.

Every one was talking about the tea-ships, and what the home Government would do. Noel, like most Virginians, had been brought up as an Episcopalian, but to-day he went into the first church he came to, which happened to be the most orthodox in the town. Just as he had sat down in the pew into which a lawyer-like person invited him, he saw the imposing figure of the doctor from Boston, majestically ascending the pulpit stairs.

It was easy to see that there was an uncommon interest in the service—every one was, in fact, eagerly waiting to hear what the preacher would say about public events; and the doctor did not disappoint this curiosity. He displayed as staunch a zeal in politics as in religion; and prayed that the enemies of the Colonies might speedily be confounded and brought to nought—at which words a deep hum went round the church.

The doctor took for his text the words, "Choose ye this day whom ye will serve;" and although he did not precisely preach a political discourse, he said so much about the fear of man which causeth a snare, and enlarged so eloquently on the sin of standing aloof in times of national trouble, that it would have been pretty evident which side he himself had espoused,

even if he had not, in his peroration, reminded his hearers that as to them much had been given, so from them would much be required; and, above all, would an account be demanded of them of what they had done with that great inheritance of freedom which their fathers had brought across the seas.

He paused, and looking around the crowded meeting-house, seemed to examine every face there. Then uplifting his right hand with a gesture of unaffected earnestness, he brought it down so heavily that the black tassels which adorned the gray cushion on which the Bible lay open before him, leapt again, as he said solemnly,—"Woe unto us of this generation, if, for a mess of pottage, we sell that birthright!"

As Noel came out, he was joined by his new acquaintance, who had been sitting close to the door.

"I thought I would look in," he observed. "Our friend's politics are better than his theology. I call that a sound uncompromising discourse, and I don't doubt that many hundred others like it will be preached this day in New England."

After dinner, instead of attending afternoon service, they went for a stroll to the high ground on the north of Providence, whence they had a fine view of land and water.

By this time Noel had made inquiries of the landlord, and had learned that his travelling companion was Dr. Benedict Arnold, an apothecary of New Haven. He took an opportunity of asking his companion if this were so. Arnold laughed.

"It is pretty plain you are not of these provinces," said he. "It is our custom to ask every stranger his birth, parentage, education, business, and private and public opinions, before he has had time to order his room at his inn. I heard Ezekiel plying you yesterday, and your answers, so I was saved the trouble of inquiring myself, and thus keeping up our character. However, honest Ezekiel hath been chary of his information, so, as I know all about you, 'tis but fair I should enlighten you a little further as to myself. 'Tis true I have a drug and book store at New Haven, and am, if not precisely an apothecary, at least as much of one as half the apothecaries in these parts. I am also a shipowner, a horse and cattle-dealer, Captain of the Governor's Bodyguard, and, as you may say, a sort of Jack-of-all-trades."

It further appeared that he had made several voyages to the West Indies, had been to Canada, and even to England. As they became more confidential, he told Noel that an ancestor

of his had been more than once elected Governor of the Province.

"Those were times worth living in," he said. "Enemies to fight, wildernesses to penetrate! 'Twas no sinecure to be a Governor in those days! But what opportunities they had, sir! I do not envy them their renown; but, by heaven! I do envy them their opportunities! They say every hour hath its man, but does every man have his hour, think you? Is there not many a man ready and longing for action, but lacking opportunity? They say men will follow if they be well led. I think I could lead, if I had anywhere to lead to. But I lack opportunity!"

A dark flush mantled in his cheeks as he said this. He was not a tall man, but as he drew himself up to his full height, he looked every inch a commander; and obeying an involuntary impulse, Noel exclaimed,—

"Well, sir, opportunity may yet come to some of us of this generation, and if so, and you'll lead, I'll follow!"

"You're a fine well-plucked young fellow, and I thought so the instant I saw you," returned Arnold, holding out his hand. "Who knows? Opportunity *may* come!"

In the New Haven coach next day Dr. Arnold and Mr. Branhholm were the only passengers. Arnold talked a great deal to his young companion, who was more and more impressed by the intellectual grasp which marked all his observations. "We are being united," he said, "by the very means which 'twas hoped would disunite us. 'Tis, I'm told, the fashion in the House of Commons to lay all the blame on the shoulders of New England, and to praise the fidelity of Virginia, New York, and the South. They are mistaken. Virginia, at least, is as staunch at heart as Massachusetts or Connecticut. The fat Quaker-traders of Philadelphia preach peace as yet; but, if I'm not much mistook, they'll show at least as much spirit in this quarrel as in their quarrels with Virginia and Maryland. We only need one outrage to unite us. Pennsylvania will forget her quarrel with Virginia, the Southern States their sorenesses among themselves; New York and New Hampshire will cease wrangling over the grants. And, once united, we *cannot* fail!"

He spoke much of the best points for attack and defence, and of how much might be done by sea. "On this coast we are greatly blessed in harbours," he remarked; "but New

London far excels both Providence and New Haven—our New Haven harbour is ruined by the mud-banks.”

The whole country, he told Noel, was preparing. Volunteers were in training, military stores were being accumulated. “And,” he added with a caustic smile, — “Dr. Peters is diligently writing home accounts of all our doings, under cover of harmless letters on the business of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel.”

New Haven was not yet the “City of Elms,” but it was, even a hundred years ago, one of the most beautiful towns of the whole continent. It was a fair sight to see the white houses, with their green and red shutters breaking the monotony, broken yet more by the green of the many gardens, and the elms which were already planted round the central square. The elms were brown and bare, but the cluster of steeples—the steeple of Yale among them—subject to no change of season, rose clear against the winter sky, as the town lay spread out with the hills at its back, and the water and shipping at its feet.

Here Noel took leave of his friend, not without regret. “If the hour comes,” said Arnold at parting, “I shall reckon on you as a volunteer in my company.”

CHAPTER IX.

BIRDS OF ILL OMEN.

BEING extremely anxious to reach Oglethorpe as soon as possible, Noel pushed on from New Haven, and getting into the line of the stages between New York and Philadelphia, his progress was somewhat quicker. But once arrived at Philadelphia, he found that he must shift for himself for the rest of the journey. Very disquieting reports met him there. The whole of the country west of the Blue Ridge was up. A large body of Cherokees, Wyandots, Shawanese, and, indeed, all the Five Nations, had come over the Ohio River, and were wasting the country and murdering the inhabitants as they went.

Noel was lucky enough to hear of a party of five or six “receivers,” as the travelling agents of the Virginian planters were then called. These persons were the commercial travellers of those regions, and often added a little trading on their own

account to the business of their employers. As they always went armed, and knew the country well, Noel was exceedingly glad of the protection their numbers afforded; and as the son of Colonel Branzholm of Oglethorpe he was received into their company without demur.

The party travelled on horseback, accompanied by a couple of wagons, drawn by the gigantic horses of Pennsylvania. In the high mountain gorges between the Alleghanies and the Blue Ridge the winters are very severe, and the snow lies late on into the spring. Even in a somewhat mild winter, a journey through this region was a considerable undertaking, though nothing to the hardships which the fur-traders encountered beyond the Alleghanies, in what is now the State of Ohio.

It was not till Christmas Eve that the travellers reached Oglethorpe. Noel had the first sight of his home as the cavalcade defiled through the forest. The road wound along with many sharp turns, and at one of these, where the trees grew sparse, and the thick underwood had been burned—leaving blackened patches, thinly covered with snow—a tolerably wide prospect became visible. Down in the bottom, the Shenandoah, like a gleaming serpent, slid over its rocky bed. Across the river, the valley rose more gradually, and opened out wider; and on a knoll, about half-way between the river and the spot where the forest began again, stood a long, low white house, with a turret, crowned by a cupola. The valley there was so wide that the sun shone full on the ground all around the house, and the westward windows seemed on fire. A slight mist which rose from the river, somewhat detaching the knoll from the rest of the landscape, gave a singularly romantic appearance to the house. A very moderate exercise of the imagination would have sufficed to see in this white-walled dwelling an Enchanted Palace, behind whose shining windows the Beauty of the Sleeping Wood might lie awaiting the Fairy Prince. So tangled was the low brushwood across the river, so solemn a guard was kept by the ever-green oaks near by, and the sombre pines on the distant topmost ridge, that, familiar as the scene was to Noel, he was almost overpowered by the sight. His heart beat so fast that it seemed as if it would suffocate him. His travelling companions observed his emotion.

"It do look a lonesome place—won'erful lonesome," said one of them. "'Tis a pretty place, too. Maybe it's the dazzle o' the snow, lyin' about here an' there, an' sorter dazzlin' yer eyes,

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as makes it look so strange-like. Don't you be down-hearted, Mr. Branzholm," he continued, giving voice to Noel's own thought; "ther' ain't nothin' wrong, ther' ain't. Injuns leaves more marks behind 'em."

We can know nothing of the horror of such fears as those to which the receiver alluded—nor of the mad fury, the longing to lead a war of extermination, which shook Noel, as they urged their horses through the swift shallow stream, and up the bank. In times of Indian wars, homesteads such as this, as fair and peaceful as this at sundown, had been a heap of blackened ashes by a little after dawn.

Noel's nerves were so highly wrought that he started as if he had been shot, as a hoarse voice croaked,—“I see you!”

“That's only the one-eyed raven—Febus, don't they call him?” said the receiver who had spoken before. “If half the tales about him be true, you'll have fair warnin', any way.”

A huge black raven was circling in the air above them.

“Yes, that's Polyphemus,” said Noel, whistling to the bird. But Polyphemus contented himself with croaking out,—“I see you!” and, spreading his enormous wings yet wider, flew away towards the house, whence the deep baying of dogs was presently heard.

Noel was recognised and greeted by several negroes, both men and women, long before he reached the house. Some of them had carried the news (or perhaps the party had been seen descending the valley), for as they rode up, Noel saw his father and mother standing in the verandah.

Before he could reach the door, he was fairly besieged by negroes of all ages and both sexes, who crowded round him, kissed his hands and his horse, and exhibited the utmost delight. “Now no more fear ob Injuns,” said one old lady, in a red petticoat and a white night-gown, with a very bright yellow handkerchief twisted round her head. Several dogs rushed up from various directions, and others, probably chained, were heard barking furiously. The enchanted palace was wide awake, and its charmed silence had given place to a hubbub like that of a market-place on market-day.

“Welcome home, Mas'r Noel; you's come in de nec' o' time,” said old Uncle Memnon, whose full name was Agamemnon, but who could never get the “niggers” to give him the other half.

“Welcome home, Mas'r Noel!” said Nebuchadnezzar, the

steward, a particularly coal-black negro, who was more pompous, and more alive to the responsibilities and dignities of his office than the Governor himself—indeed, in his secret heart, Nebuchadnezzar believed that the ordering of affairs at Oglethorpe was a matter of difficulty and importance quite equal to the ordering of the Province of Virginia.

Amidst all this confusion, Noel saw his mother running forward to meet him, and heard her cry,—“My dear boy! oh, my dearest boy!”

She threw her arms round him almost before he had fairly dismounted, and all in a flutter, half weeping, half laughing, drew his head down till she could kiss his lips, while the assembled negroes uttered cries of delight, and the dogs leaped madly round him. Amidst these demonstrations of welcome, Noel was taken into the house between his parents, who alternately embraced him, and asked him a thousand questions—the first being,—“Had he seen any Indians on the road?”

As the mother and son stood together, her hands clasped over his arm, the resemblance between them was very strong. Mrs. Branhholm was tall, and her figure was still as slender as a girl's. Her complexion had been very fine, but was now somewhat sallow by daylight; but she was still a very handsome woman, and her eyes—which could be languid or brilliant according to her mood—were a second (or to speak more correctly, a first) edition of Noel's own.

Mrs. Branhholm was precisely what she seemed at first sight—impulsive, wilful, warm-tempered, and warm-hearted, capable perhaps of some follies, but also of great generousities; like most Virginians, indolent and careless so long as there was no particular call for energy, but possessed of a spirit which could always rise to the height of the occasion.

Her husband, who in his youth had been reputed the handsomest man in Western Virginia, was probably a more striking figure at fifty than he had been at twenty-five. He was not quite so tall as his son, but was perfectly well made, and of great strength and activity. His appearance was made more remarkable by his hair having turned a very fine soft iron-gray, while his eyebrows were still as dark as ever. This contrast—which may be seen in many of the portraits of the powdered gentlemen of the day—gave him an air of aristocratic refinement, borne out by the thin-bridged nose, and the mouth almost too delicate for a man. He wore his own hair tied

in a queue; and when he rode to Williamsburg to attend the session of the Assembly, in his colonel's blue coat and dark-red waistcoat and breeches, he was, in the opinion of his slaves, equal to Lord Dunmore in splendour and dignity.

The sharp fragrance of the burning hickory-logs perfumed the long low room in which the family took their meals, and whose windows commanded a fine view of the valley, the river, and the mountains beyond. Several of the dogs followed their masters into the room, and stretched themselves on the bear-skin before the fire, but watching, with their heads laid on their paws.

It was long before the party rose from supper, and longer still before they retired to rest. Even the news from Boston was of secondary interest to the nearer and more awful peril of the Indians. The usual Christmas festivities had been deferred on account of it. Noel had to listen to a long list of tragedies. A Dutch family had been killed last summer, and in October, one of Captain Russell's sons and some whites and negroes; and about the same time, Boone's eldest son was shot, and the whole family nearly cut off at Cumberland Gap. The Cherokees had been vainly summoned to give up the guilty parties. The murdering season had fairly set in, and the great Delaware chiefs, Cornstalk and Captain Pipe, were bent on war.

In vain had the Governor of Virginia written letters exhorting the chiefs to "keep fast hold of the covenant chain," and reminding them that by these outrages they would incur the wrath of the Great King beyond the Big Water. Every day brought more and more alarming rumours, and it was even said that the messengers of peace had been fired on. Men sent out to kill meat for the garrison of Fort Chartres had been set upon and killed, and their scalps were hanging before the wigwams of the Indian towns by the Ohio. As yet the cloud of war seemed to cling to the regions near the confluence of the Ohio and the Great Kenhawa; but who could tell how suddenly it might drift eastward, and burst upon the very heart of Virginia?

Defences were being organised. Every planter laid in a store of ammunition, watch was kept, and a cordon of outposts had been established. Lord Dunmore had spoken of taking the field himself, should things grow much worse. And all the while the other cloud, which hung above the Old Dominion, was growing darker every day—although hitherto the idea of Independence, if it had already dawned in the minds of half a

dozen of the boldest politicians of the popular party, was very far from being the desire of the majority. Redress of grievances, restoration of rights, was the cry to which the people and most of their leaders rallied. A petition to the King—this, they thought, must obtain them justice. But there were already two parties in the House of Burgesses—one resolved to be free, and the other resolved to be loyal.

It was with great grief that Noel learned that his Uncle Rupert had taken his stand with this latter party. Mr. Butler rode over from Fairmead on the third morning after Noel's arrival. He was a somewhat heavy-built man, florid, and naturally rather jovial in expression, but he now had a perplexed and harassed look, which ill accorded with his bluff features.

"There's the devil to pay here, my boy, as I suppose you know," he said to his nephew, as he walked his white mare up the ascent to the house. "It's all the fault of that damned traitor Hutchinson and his friends. They have bid fair to ruin the Colonies, that they might get some big nuts in the scramble. But now he's unmasked, I don't see why there should be so much soreness. Here's even old Ben Franklin says he's much less indignant with ministers, now he knows whose hands pulled the strings in the first instance. What we want is a petition to the King. Once we can persuade His Majesty that we aint rebels, our wrongs will be redressed. Come, you've been in England; say you not so, too?"

"Nay, my dear uncle," replied Noel,—“I fear, on the contrary, that once we persuade the British ministry that we will never rebel, our cause is lost, and we shall but be made a cushion on which needy politicians may fall soft.”

Mr. Butler's ruddy face crimsoned with vexation and disappointment.

"My brother Branhholm told me your travels had made quite an Englishman of you," he said. "But I see how it is—Jasper Fleming has been teaching you out of Sam Adams's horn-book!"

"I form my own opinions, uncle, I assure you," returned Noel, with some dignity. "I need no one to teach me when the interests of my country are threatened, nor my duty when they are."

"Then there'll be open rebellion before long, mark my words, my young wisacre!" said his uncle testily. "Some fine morn-

ing you'll find yourself in arms against your lawful Sovereign, sir! I've always liked you; I always thought you was a lad of spirit; and I own 'twould vex me more than enough to see your head a button for a gallows-rope, like a common thief."

"Should I ever have the honour to die for my country, sir, I think I can promise you that the manner of my death shall befit a gentleman," retorted Noel, holding the head referred to very high in the air.

It thus came about that by the time they reached the verandah, and Nebuchadnezzar was heard hurrying up "dese niggers" to take the horse, Mr. Butler was in as pretty a towering rage as an uncle could wish to be with a nephew.

"Your young game-cock here has learned to crow betimes, sister," was his greeting to Myra.

Noel, who had remained in the verandah to give his own wrath a moment to cool, was here addressed by Nebuchadnezzar. "When Mas'r Ed'erd tell you 'bout Injun las' night, Mas'r Noel," said that sable worthy, mysteriously; "he not tell de wuss—de wuss is dat de pidjins come las' year, same as come in King Philip's time. Berry bad sign dat," he continued, rolling his eyes and his tongue. "Plenty trouble, Mas'r Noel, plenty trouble—sho' as de sparks fly up'ards. You see!"

"I see you!" croaked a voice just over Noel's head.

"Ha! ha! dat on'y ole Fhebus, Mas'r Noel—he tell you, welcome home," said the major-domo, chuckling. "Ole Fhebus, he give us notis' if Injun comin.' Ole Fhebus, him eye see droo nine-inch wall—he see Injun udder side de Ohio."

Meanwhile, Polyphemus had responded to Noel's invitation, and flapped noisily down from the top of the verandah to the balustrade, where he sat, stretching out his neck for Noel to scratch his glossy poll, evincing his pleasure by a succession of grunt-like croakings.

Polyphemus was recognised by the negroes as the tutelary deity, or presiding Genius of Oglethorpe. He had lived there since the memory of man. According to the traditions of the plantation, Mr. Braxholm's father, who would have been eighty years old, had he been living at the time of this story, remembered him as a full-fledged raven, when he was a boy. Indeed, the youth of Polyphemus stretched back into the vague mistiness of fable. Not a negro on the plantation but firmly believed that he was hatched long before King Philip's

war—now a hoary tradition, a hundred years old. But, though Polyphemus was evidently an old bird, his sable plumes were still as glossy, and his solitary eye was as bright as ever—for, like his Sicilian namesake, he possessed but a single visual orb. The other had been extinguished some fifty years ago by the beak of a game-cock, whom Polyphemus (then a smart young raven of forty or thereabouts) had provoked to single combat.

The tradition went on to say that the game-cock had instantly paid for Polyphemus's eye with his own life. This part of the story was, however, less well authenticated; and Colonel Branhholm himself affirmed that the cock had not only survived the duel many years, but had in his old age defeated and slain that favourite bird of old Mr. Butler's, whose death he had so much taken to heart.

However this may have been, the exasperated fowl no doubt went down to his grave (whenever and however he gave up the ghost) with the consoling thought that, by thus demolishing his right eye, he had spoiled his enemy's beauty, and of course it had suffered to some extent. Two eyes are essential to symmetry, and have a dignity which the solitary orb cannot support. But Polyphemus's remaining eye was so amazingly expressive that those who knew him forgot to miss the other. Polyphemus, however, had evidently neither forgotten nor forgiven its untimely extinction; he vindictively pursued everything in the shape of a cock, and even occasionally harassed an unoffending chicken—who might have remonstrated with the lamb of classic fable,

“*Equidem natus non eram.*”

In spite of this mishap, very little escaped Polyphemus's notice. In particular, he was believed to be able to espy an Indian at distances indefinitely beyond the limits of the horizon. The Indians themselves had a superstitious awe of him, and believed that a Manitou dwelt in Polyphemus for the protection of Oglethorpe, and many were the stories current on the plantation of timely warnings he had given.

Curiosity is a trait of most of the more intelligent races—it was Polyphemus's ruling passion. Much as he loved talking, he would hold his tongue for hours together, while he lay *perdu* in some dark corner, waiting till he should be left alone, to begin an exhaustive investigation of the premises. Letters interested him deeply. He loved the rustle of the paper, and

having observed that human beings appeared to find something in them, he would examine them closely to discover the secret. He had torn up some valuable papers in a rage at being unable to see anything in them.

But perhaps his favourite occupation was eavesdropping. No matter how retired the spot to which the dwellers at Oglethorpe might repair for a little private conversation, Polyphemus would stealthily follow, and taking up a convenient position near by, be on the alert to cry,—“I see you!” at the most critical moment of the interview. Even Nebuchadnezzar, who had stolen out to conceal a surreptitious hoard of piastres in some remote part of the plantation, had suddenly leapt half his own height in the air, on hearing a harsh but exultant voice croak, “I see you!” and looking up had beheld a sable form perched on the tree above him, and a glittering eye boring his guilty breast through and through, with a point-blank directness only possible to a single-barrelled gaze.

Polyphemus was a remarkably handsome bird, and he seemed to know it. When not engaged in playing the domestic spy, he was usually preening his magnificent blue-black plumes, and spreading them in the sun, in whose rays they glistened with a thousand iridescent gleams. His wings had an immense sweep; and as he struck out like some strong swimmer, across the cloudless blue, above the highest cedar-tops, he might have been the fateful Bird of Odin, going to the last Battle of the Gods—so solemnly did those huge dusky pinions cleave their way through the infinite clearness of the sky.

CHAPTER X.

MOUNTAIN ROADS.

Only the eternal wind makes music there.

WHEN Noel, having recovered his equanimity in the course of this brief interview with the protecting demon of Oglethorpe, stepped in at the French window, he found his father and mother sitting at the table, while his uncle was drawing their attention to certain passages in a letter which he had spread out before them.

“What reasonable objection can you have to laying the

letter before the House?" he was saying, evidently struggling hard to speak dispassionately, and as evidently greatly perturbed. "Sister Myra, you was always a woman of penetration—you, at least, must see that the ruin of the Province will follow, if we continue in the present course. An open rupture is the only possible consequence. If you would not see your husband a rebel, you'll try to bring him round to our view."

"My husband is no more a rebel than you yourself, brother," said Mrs. Branzholm warmly. "And I must say, I think the claims of the country which reared us ought to be stronger than the claims of a King and a ministry three thousand miles off, and not one of whom ever set foot in this country. It may be because I'm but a woman, but I confess that I feel Virginia pull stronger at my heart-strings than the King of England can do, if he was the best king that ever wore a crown."

"Heaven help the Province, then, if the women turn rebels!" cried Mr. Butler in a heat.

"Look you, brother Butler," said his brother-in-law, laying his hand on the letter, "I can put it to you in a very few words. This letter is a good letter enough, but the gist of it is, *we will have our rights restored, if we can persuade the King to restore 'em*. Now the gist of our meaning is, *we will have our rights, though we must force the King to restore 'em*."

"This is open rebellion. Remember Nicholas Bacon!" exclaimed Butler. "It is high treason!"

"Only if it fails, uncle," said Noel, striking into the conversation.

"Young man, would you take arms against your lawful Sovereign?" demanded Butler sternly.

"The Commons of England did so for less provocation," said Noel undauntedly. "I saw the field of Naseby when I was in England. Better have a Naseby here, than consent to be treated like a conquered and vassal people!"

"Nonsense, boy!" said Colonel Branzholm, who was unprepared to go this length. "You talk like a hot-headed youngster as you are. There'll be no fighting, if we show our teeth betimes. But this letter, brother Butler, has too much submission in it. Once we put our tails between our legs, and down comes the whip. Show you can bite, man, and then no one will care to bite you!" After a great deal of talk, Mr. Butler was obliged to content himself with his brother-in-

law's promise to put the letter in his pocket when he went to Williamsburg, but to use his own discretion as to what he did with it when there.

"I see you!" cried Polyphemus, thrusting in his head for an instant, just as this conclusion had been come to. Then, taking in the situation at one masterly glance, he added, "Don't be a fool!" and went off to pursue his investigations elsewhere. Like that of most oracles, the warning was too ambiguous to be of much avail. Still, every one looked rather disconcerted for a moment, and then Mr. Butler, recovering himself, burst into a hearty laugh. "'Pon my soul," he said, "one would think the old rascal understood what we was saying!"

"So he do, Mas'r Rupert," said Nebuchadnezzar, who now appeared, with a couple of sable myrmidons, bringing in refreshments. "Der ain't nothin' dat rab'n don't understand—'spesh'ly mischief—an' he know Injun in de wind jes' dis presen' time, jes's well's we do."

But as yet the mountains were between Oglethorpe and any hostile red man.

In spite of their disagreement on the great question—or, perhaps, in consequence of it—Mr. Butler made a point of his sister and her husband spending the New Year with him at Fairmead.

"This confounded alarm has spoilt our Christmas," he said; "but that's no reason why we should not have a little fun on New Year's Day. It may be the last time—God only knows what the end of all this will be, and, right or wrong, my part is taken."

So a couple of days later the Branzholms set off in state in a low-built, square-bodied gig, like an overgrown sulkey—or rather, like nothing but itself, being fearfully and wonderfully contrived, with a yellow body, a red morocco top, and a window in the side—placed there probably to enable the occupants to reconnoitre the enemy, for the gig was apparently constructed to stand a siege, and was certainly musket-proof, being studded all over with large square-headed brass nails, like those in a travelling trunk. Noel rode by the side of this substantial vehicle, and the rear was brought up by four lusty black servants (in liveries which had been made in London), who carried pistols on their holsters with the spare cloaks.

For part of the way, the road led through a wild and dreary forest region, to which some of the early pioneers had given the name of the *Shadow of Death*. It lay on the slopes of a mountain. Vast spaces of blackened underwood showed that the forest had been fired—perhaps by the same thunderbolt which had blasted a stately spruce pine. The dead pine rose bleached and skeleton-like among the living trees—which were mostly evergreens—and gave the spot a ghastly horror, as of death in life. The place was gloomy even at mid-day; at night, with the spectre pine standing sentinel, it was a fit spot for a witches' sabbath. At high moon, the light which penetrated these withered glades was a sickly greenish twilight, like the light in an ocean cavern. There was a horrible stillness, broken only by the far-distant note of the cock-of-the-woods, or the creak of the carriage-wheels as they sank deep in the black soil. The day had clouded over, a little fine snow was falling, and a deadly chill struck through the air. Suddenly, a piercing blast, keen as a knife, swept by, and the ghostly forest shrieked and roared, the trees rocked and cracked, the horses plunged and reared, and snorted with terror, and became so unmanageable that two of the outriders had to dismount and lead them. This delay saved the lives of the whole party, for a second and fiercer blast was followed by a wilder uproar, and with a terrific crash, the skeleton pine came rattling to the ground, and lay right across the road, not twenty yards in front of the carriage.

The travellers had no time to realise their almost miraculous escape, for the horses struggled so violently that the carriage was very nearly overturned. Fortunately, the ground was soft, and the wheels had sunk in so deep that it only subsided against a bank, and Mrs. Branzholm took the opportunity of alighting. But the horses had to be taken out, and the carriage dragged over the fallen tree by the gentlemen and their servants, and the afternoon was well advanced before the cavalcade was once more in order of march. As they descended, the scene became less savage, until, shortly after passing some old tobacco-grounds, now run wild again, but where the stumps of many trees proved former cultivation, they saw the Shenandoah, now a broad stream, flowing through pleasant meadows, amidst which, sheltered by a clump of trees, stood a large white house. It was built round three sides of a quadrangle, the open side facing the river. A very large piece

of ground was enclosed on the side which looked towards the mountains—the part of it near the house laid out in terraces, but the rest left pretty much to Nature, except that the paths were kept in good order, and the trees pruned away wherever there was a good point of view.

All this of course could not be seen with bodily eyes from the spurs of the mountains, but Mrs. Branzholm saw it clearly enough with her heart's eyes, as she turned to her husband and said, half laughing, half crying (for the fright had rather upset her nerves): "Noel, I'm sure, has seen no place so beautiful as this, in all his travels."

Even in winter there was no bleakness in the aspect of this landscape, and the lower they descended, the higher the vast background of the mountains rose behind them, and with every additional half mile of distance, took on a mellower richness of colour, while the infinite variety of outline arranged itself into one stupendous whole. At different altitudes, all the trees of the forest grew there, in every shade of green and brown and yellow. Here and there, some bare rocky promontory, with its crown of pines, served as a landmark for the eye, which would otherwise have been bewildered and lost in the ocean of purple boughs and sombre evergreens. Patches of deep-red or brown showed where trees had been fired to make a mountain-pasture. A wild turkey, disturbed in his covert by the tramp of horse-hoofs, was flying towards the higher woods—which seemed more lonely since he sought them for a refuge. And over all, as the clouds passed, and the hours, they brought ever-changing combinations of lights and shadows, so that the whole panorama changed as one watched it, as a face changes—now smiling and gay, now dreamy, now cold and frowning, and sometimes terrible—but for ever new. But all the expressions of this mighty Face of Nature, save the last, filled the heart of the beholder with a sense of infinite consolation and repose.

After storm follows calm. The New Year came in peacefully enough; and before the Branzholms returned home, Noel had begun to look forward to bidding Miss Digby welcome to Oglethorpe, in spite of Indians and everything else.

CHAPTER XL

SOME PAINFUL PASSAGES IN THE EXPERIENCE OF LIEUTENANT DIGBY.

Valentino. Hark ye, coxcomb, I can be angry, very angry, d'ye mark me !—THE SOLDIER'S FORTUNE.

WHEN Noel told his brother that Lieutenant Digby had exchanged into the 29th Foot, he had no suspicion of how much tragedy was connected with that exchange. The Digbys were, as has been said, of a good old family—good enough to be collaterally related to the Digby of Gunpowder Plot—and, until a year ago, Frederick Digby had believed himself heir to a fine old hall and a comfortable estate in Staffordshire. He had always known that the estate was encumbered, but as his father had for several years lived very quietly, he believed that it was gradually recovering, when the death of his father revealed a secret which had been kept through a generation. A claimant appeared to dispute the validity of the marriage of Mr. Digby's father, and succeeded in proving his title to the estate. It transpired that Mr. Digby had for some years past been aware of this claim, but had not believed the story until shortly before his death, when he made a discovery which was fatal to his own title. Ill-natured persons whispered that poor Digby had put himself out of the way in despair ; but his children always believed that the fatal dose was taken by inadvertence. Mr. Digby was a weak, indolent, easy man, who, having sown a few wild oats in his youth, had settled down into a somewhat pompous country squire. He had never troubled himself overmuch about his children, although he made a merit of allowing his wife's mother (an ancient dame, cut on a long lost pattern, and the only person of whom Mr. Digby stood in awe) to superintend Althea's education after her mother died. As for Fred, he bought him a commission in the Dragoons, and felt that he had done his duty nobly.

Mr. Digby was one of those men, who, without being themselves superior to their fellows in any respect save bodily vigour, hold that women are inferior animals—all very much alike except in looks, and best managed when kept, like dogs, in their proper place. When he had chucked Althea under the chin, and bidden her be a good girl, and she should have a

husband one of these days, he considered that he had shown himself all that a father should be. His wife, whom he had married before she was eighteen, did not share these views. She resented the good-humoured banter of his usual address to women (when not put out, Mr. Digby had a jovial way with him, which gave him much success with village-beauties), even more than the bullying tone he took when his authority was disputed. She even had the presumption to ask her husband what he would have said had she herself made free with Tom Gardener, as he did with pretty Molly the milkmaid. Mr. Digby's reply was profane, but illogical—he had a mind above logic, and could never have been convinced against his will.

It will thus be seen that Mr. Digby was scarcely a man to inspire his children with a passionate affection. After his wife's death (which happened about six years before his own), he at first gave himself up to the unrestrained enjoyments of a bachelor's life—enjoyments which he found so expensive, that his already burdened estate soon refused to support them. His health failing about the same time, he made this an excuse for retrenchment. But people said that he was more broken than could be accounted for by these causes. He rapidly degenerated into a peevish invalid, and became utterly dependent on his daughter, whom he had never much liked in his secret heart. She was, he thought, a stuck-up minx, with her mother's faddles. Fred he had found more to his taste, but too much disposed to dangle at the women's apron-strings.

Some circumstances attending Mr. Digby's death, combined with the discovery of his faulty title, gave colour to the rumour that his death had been voluntary—a belief which Althea secretly shared, although she never admitted it. The fortunate claimant of the estates, a person originally brought up in a much lower station in life than that to which his title raised him, behaved in the matter with a certain coarse good-nature, and had even proposed that Miss Althea should marry him, and thus to some extent "make things comfortable,"—thus he phrased it. But Althea did not accept this well-intended offer, to which her brother would hardly allow her to return a dignified refusal—he wished to reply with a horsewhip, and Althea was very glad to get him safe out of England and the way of temptation. She and her brother had each a very small fortune, left them by their grandmother; but their position in England was sadly changed. It seemed therefore a very happy escape, when

letters from America brought an invitation to the young people to make their home with a widowed cousin, who further informed them of the death of their father's uncle, a very aged man, who had gone out to Virginia some fifty years before, and who had made a Will in their favour. The same ship brought a more formal announcement of this, in the shape of a lawyer's letter. There were, however, certain informalities in the Will, and it was possible that Fred and his sister might after all only inherit as next of kin, along with several cousins.

Lieutenant Digby's loss of fortune had obliged him to sell his commission in the Dragoons, and he was very glad to accept an opportunity of exchanging into a regiment then quartered at Boston. It is a great descent from a horse regiment to a foot, and the sudden collapse of one's fortunes, just at one's entrance into life, is trying to the most philosophic mind. Both Fred and his sister felt bitterly that life had changed, and that England itself had grown strange, when their ancestral home was left to its new and uncongenial lord. But they were young. Fred was sanguine, and Althea had a high spirit, of the temper which rises higher in misfortune. When a new prospect—a new world—opened before them, their courage revived. Life would be easier where their story was less well known. Under other circumstances, a voyage to the Colonies in 1773 might not have appeared a great piece of good fortune, but now it was an escape from scenes and people too closely connected with the past; and it presently began to offer the promise of something more. Like all young soldiers, Fred longed for what he called “a brush,” and a brush was every day more and more likely to occur. “I grieve to own that he fairly gloated over the thought of shortly enjoying the chance of cutting down Mr. Hancock or Sam Adams; and saw himself, in his mind's eye, called up by the Governor to receive on the steps of the Province House a public compliment for his gallant behaviour.

As he had plenty of animal spirits and an excellent digestion, even the exchange from a crack cavalry regiment into the 29th Foot did not materially depress him. True, he would occasionally observe, that it was cursed hard to have no better a beast to ride than John Mein's sorrel, which he had seen advertised at Knox's *London Book Store* in King Street—“N.B. A saddle horse for hire.” But he secretly felt it to be harder still, that in spite of his one-and-twenty years, his five feet eleven

and three-quarters, a sea voyage, and misfortunes, his chin was still so smooth, that when he went every morning to have his hair dressed at the barber's who had charge of the heads of the officers of the 29th, the knight of the brass basin never failed to say—as briskly as though it were rather a subject for congratulation,—“No shaving yet, Lieutenant, I think?” and cheerfully set to work with pomade and powder.

Lieutenant Digby usually studied the *Massachusetts Gazette* for the benefit of the interior of his skull, while the barber was cultivating the exterior. He would devote his first attention to the advertisements, both as affording the easiest reading, and also because he was always on the look-out for a better horse. However the lawyers might decide about Uncle Joe's will, he was sure to come in for enough to keep a tolerable hack, and the sorrel would, he felt, be intolerable much longer; his only recommendations were that he was always to be had (for no one else could endure his paces), and that he was to be had cheap. “But he's dear at any money,” thought Fred, shifting uneasily under the barber's hands. “I'm as stiff as a poker before I've rode him ten miles.”

The Lieutenant was not perfectly ingenuous with himself in these mental complaints of the sorrel. But in the simplest of us there is an odd duality—sometimes, indeed, a plurality. As Mrs. Malaprop admirably puts it, we are all three gentlemen in one. Fred Digby would have put up with the sorrel's paces for some time longer, if he had not seen a smile cross Miss Fleming's face the last time she saw him on that Rosinante. The idea of appearing as a figure of fun in Miss Fleming's eyes was distraction; the Lieutenant's mind refused to entertain it, and took refuge in the less shocking thought that his brother-officers could not possibly admire the sorrel, although good-nature had led them to speak leniently of his defects. But in the deepest recesses of his soul he knew that Miss Fleming had smiled. That Jasper Fleming, who was with her, had smiled also was beyond a doubt,—Digby cordially hated him for it,—but the sharpness of the sting lay in Miss Fleming's smile.

There was an amazing variety in the advertisements in the *Gazette*. Snake and jack watch-chains; canes and rattans; patent ass-skin for pocket-books; cake-blackening, and Daffy's elixir; lady's Josephs and riding-habits; dimothy, callimancoes, mantua silks, satins, taffeties, pompadores, and flowered gauzes;

blue, pink, and white alamodes and persians ; figured pelongs, English damasks, striped and brocaded lutestrings ; camblets striped and plain ; bombazeens, buckrams and duffles ; thread mitts and kid gloves ; women's callimancoe shoes (36s. old Tenour, or 4s. 11d. lawful money the pair) ; aniseed and snake-root waters ; mixed, claret, and snuff-coloured broad-cloths ; spruce, Philadelphia, and Baltimore beer ; Fyal wines ; Connecticut beef (to be procured, with excellent cider, at No. 9 South Side, Town Dock) ; "very neat instruments for drawing teeth ;" mathematical instruments (to be had at the sign of *Admiral Vernon*, opposite the *Golden Ball*) ; some theological works ; and a "heartly male negro child of a good breed" (to be given away, inquire of the *Printer*). Such were a few of the items over which the Lieutenant idly "cast his eye"—to quote the invariable phrase used by the barber in handing the *Gazette* to his beardless customer. He also read with languid interest that Isaac Greenwood (in Fore Street, next door to Dr. Clark's) had a number of "umbrilloes" (made, not imported) for sale ; and that Peter Curtis taught dancing "in a most polite manner," in Queen Street, having acquired the art in Paris. There was also a grief-renewing notice to the effect, that "knives, scissors, razors, and all sorts of steel things," were to be had of Sam Franklin at the *Crown and Razor*, South End ; and a "healthy negro woman, about forty years of age," was to be "sold or let,"—but no horse.

The Lieutenant had read straight on—not even omitting the "Run away from the subscriber," which was here seldom headed as in Virginian and Carolinian journals, with a rude but spirited cut of the truant negro, stick and bundle in hand. He was yawning over the description of the "lively negro fellow, named Scipio, 5 ft. 7 in. high, and 20 years of age," supposed to have gone off with a "mulatto wench about the same age, named Kate Daniel ;" when his eye suddenly fell on the following :—

"STOLEN FROM THE SUBSCRIBER'S STABLES,

"On Monday night last, a sorrel horse, little under 14 hands high, with a blaze on his face, a very thin fore-top and mane, two saddle-gaulds on each side of his ribs, occasioned by a saddle, switch tail, trots very rough, canters very rough, is dull with the whip ; an exceeding good chair-horse. Very thick and heavy in proportion to his height, has a high rump and a little hollow back. I don't reckon of any brand. I will give a *Generous Reward* to

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any person that will take the said horse up, and bring him to the subscriber, or secure him so that the owner may get him again.

JOHN MEIN."

The Lieutenant had groaned more than once during the perusal of this candid description. "Find yourself a little sick, p'raps, now, Lef-tenant?" said the barber; "try a few drops of my stomach-cordial. Zedekiah! That boy's the plague of my life. Zedekiah! fetch the cordial, and a measuring-spoon!"

In vain did the Lieutenant protest that nothing ailed him. "I saw you go as red as your own uniform, and then turn as white as this hair-powder, Lef-tenant Digby," said the barber solemnly—who, as he bled and drew teeth, considered himself a medical authority. "'Tis a spasim, Mr. Digby, consequent on the east winds which always prevail in Boston in the spring of the year."

The barber exaggerated,—perhaps in the interests of his cordial,—but it was true that the ingenuous countenance of Lieutenant Digby had been suffused with a deep blush of shame and vexation as he realised that he himself had been publicly seen on the back of this beast. "I always knew he was a devilish ugly horse," he thought ruefully; "but somehow he looks even worse in print. I shan't be able to show my face at the Coffee-house. 'Trots very rough'—he trots like a camel—never was on such a beast before, and never want to be again; but for all that, he reads worse than he looks. They used to say he might have been worse when I complained of him, but if they once get hold of this description I shall never hear the last of it. No wonder Miss Fleming smiled!"

These painful reflections were interrupted by the appearance of Zedekiah, a red-headed boy with freckles, and eyes of so pale a blue as to be nearly invisible. Fred would fain have declined the proffered restorative, but the barber had twisted one hand in the wrapper which was tucked round his patient's neck, and thus had him at an advantage almost equal to that possessed by a canine practitioner when about to administer a bolus to an invalid bull-dog. A slender spoon was dexterously thrust into his mouth, and he found himself gulping down something the like whereof he had never tasted before. So highly aromatic and pungent was the concoction, that it brought the tears to his eyes, and produced a scorching sensation, which seemed to extend throughout the whole length of his spine.

"You'll find yourself powerful revived, Mr. Digby; it never fails, my cordial don't," said the complacent barber. "The colour's come back to your cheeks a'ready."

The Lieutenant would have been content to find himself a little less powerfully revived. He was glad to try to forget his excoriated œsophagus by plunging again into the depths of the *Gazette*. Even should the sorrel return once more to his master's crib, Fred inly vowed to mount him never again—no, not though he were the only saddle-horse in Boston for sale or hire. Stay—what is this? "To be sold by the Executors of Capt. Hopestill Foster, late of Boston, gent. deceased, an extraordinary good Negro Fellow, about 21 years of age, four pair of Bedscrews, one pair of Handscrews, a *Horse* and Chaise, a Horsecart, about 12,000 of good dry Boards, a large Scale Beam that will weigh a Tun on end, and about ten hundred of weights."

"It's true he's only a chaise-horse," thought the Lieutenant; "but he can't be worse than the sorrel, and, at any rate, they don't describe him. I'd sooner lose five guineas nor have my brother officers see that confounded description." He was for once thankful to turn to that portion of the *Gazette* which was devoted to political and town news—a part which he usually omitted, as monstrous dull reading.

But this time there was very little here, the chief item being the notice issued by the new fire-wards (among whom Fred saw with infinite disgust the names of John Hancock and Samuel Adams) begging the shopkeepers to be careful in extinguishing the pots of coals with which they warmed their shops. He read with more satisfaction an eloquent denunciation of the "selectmen, justices of the peace, and the rest of the rebellious herd of calves, asses, knaves, and fools, which compose The Faction."

As the weeks went on, and the news of the destruction of the tea must soon reach England, the commonest events acquired importance, and even the most thoughtless paid some attention to the signs of the times, and watched the political weather. What will they say in England? What will they do? What shall we all do next? These were become vital questions—no one could tell how vital. Even Fred, the least reflective of men, found himself looking at the people who thronged the streets, and wondering what might be their opinions of King George the Third and Lord North. Fleet Street itself was scarce more

thronged than King Street—merchants, ladies, soldiers, sailors, market-men and women, grave divines of Boston, and sometimes a shaven priest from Maryland, men crying lobsters, workmen carrying the tools of their trades, horses, oxen, private coaches and hackneys, chaises and sulkeys—as he watched all this perpetual motion, Fred would idly wonder to see how very tolerable an imitation they had got here of an English city.

It was, perhaps, his friendship for Noel Branzholm which a little depressed Fred's spirits whenever he heard the oft-repeated words, "When the despatches come from home." The mess was daily seasoned with conjectures as to the particular form in which the inevitable Nemesis would disembark—and the conjectures all agreed in this, that that shape would be terrible to the evil-doers, but a praise and joy to them that did well. The young officers in particular could scarcely restrain their impatience, and counted the days until the messenger of wrath should arrive. Fred joined in these joyful anticipations, but was occasionally conscious of a qualm when he happened to see Miss Fleming.

He met her on the Mall now and then, and each time he said to himself that it was a horrid shame that because of all these confounded affairs, Mrs. Maverick and his sister could not be intimate with the Flemings. Mary would have been a nice friend for Ally. Then there was young Branzholm; Ally and he might have made a capital match, if Branzholm had not been such an ass. It was downright disgusting to think of a fine young fellow throwing himself away—and a fine young woman with nobody better to beau her about than that lantern-jawed Yankee. "I should like a fling at that fellow," thinks Fred, giving the air a vicious cut with his rattan; "but he's only a civilian—a merchant or shopkeeper, or shipbuilder or something,—and I suppose I shall never have a chance."

The Lieutenant suppressed a sigh and a yawn, and turned into King Street. It was a Saturday evening at the beginning of March. A crowd of people were gathered round Mrs. Chapman's window, which displayed a painted transparency. It represented a pedestal, with several names written upon it; upon the pedestal was placed the bust of a young boy, and in the background there appeared a white figure with a bloody stain on its breast.

A young man in the dress of a Quaker, whom Fred had often seen in Knox's book-store, and knew to be named Nat

Greene, was talking in a low voice to a group in the middle of the street. "What does it all mean?" asked Fred of a sergeant who stood at the edge of the crowd, and who had a most portentous squint, and a complexion all the colours of the rainbow. "'Tis the nanniversary of the 5th o' March, sir," replied the sergeant, saluting. "That there's the bust o' young Snyder on the monument, and those names is the names o' them as was killed when the riot was, and that's the ghost o' Snyder at the back. And if I may make so bold, sir, I think 'tis a pity as there ain't a few more on 'em on monuments in the same way."

The sergeant took the precaution to utter this loyal sentiment in a low voice; but one or two of the bystanders turned sharply, and there was a moment during which Fred enjoyed a vision of himself and the sergeant with the variegated countenance standing shoulder to shoulder, back to the wall, and bidding the rebels come on and do their worst. But a person in a red cloak and white wig, who suddenly appeared, said a few words, inaudible to Fred, and the one or two quarrelsomely-disposed bystanders went off quietly, muttering something about "lobsters" and "bloody-backs."

"I thought they meant mischief," observed Fred, preparing to depart.

"That's what they do *mean*, sir, but they dursn't do it," replied the sergeant, and, with a respectful salute, he too went on his way.

The bells were tolling—as they had done at noon. Fred felt hipped, and was glad to look in at the British Coffee-House, where he was to meet a man about a horse. The sorrel had never returned, and Captain Foster's chaise-horse had proved to be broken-winded, was sixteen years old, and had never had a saddle on.

As Fred turned a corner, he came plump on Miss Mary Fleming, leaning on the arm of her cousin Jasper, to whom she was talking very confidentially, and who was laughing at the moment at something she had said. Fred's hat was off, before he had time to remember that he had determined *not* to bow the next time he might meet the lady in company with her obnoxious relative—who had the insolence to remove his own hat in return.

"Damn the fellow!" thought Fred, stumbling down the step into the Coffee-house out of sheer indignation. "Does he think I meant to notice *him*?"

CHAPTER XII.

THE BOSTON PORT-BILL.

Guildford. Now may Heaven's curse
Lie on their heads that are the cause of this !

LADY JANE GREY.

MR. FLEMING's prophecy that "something would have to be done" was not long unfulfilled. Almost before the boys had ceased searching Dorchester beach for the tea which the sea cast up there in wind-rows like seaweed, the Boston Port-Bill was passed, and in the second week of May the first news of it was brought by a ship which had sailed from the Downs on the 10th of April.

Two or three days afterwards, on the 15th, and while a town-meeting is sitting to consider what shall be done, the bill itself arrives, along with the new Governor—for Ministers have thought it politic to yield to the clamour about the letters so far as to supersede Governor Hutchinson. The new Governor, Thomas Gage, was with Braddock—poor foolish, pragmatical, but brave and kind-hearted Braddock—on that disastrous day upon the Monongahala, and helped to carry the dying General off the field, but has not learned by his example not to despise his enemy. He, too, is a kind-hearted man, mild and affable, but feeble of will. He lands to the music of the batteries, and is met by the members of both Houses of the Legislature,—the Councillors as resplendent as the rainy day will allow, in white wigs and scarlet cloaks,—and so goes up King Street in solemn procession, his commission borne before him, and Hancock's cadets escorting him to the Province House.

Among the seven companies drawn up in King Street to salute him, are the Boston Grenadiers, with their lieutenant, Knox the bookseller. The new Governor much admires their military appearance, and politely returns their salute—perhaps thinking the while of poor Braddock's last words,—“We shall know better how to deal with them next time.” But this time it is not Indians, but Hancock and Sam Adams and the Faction, with whom he must deal. And so, with the Boston Port-Bill in his pocket, he goes up King Street to the State House, while the heavens lower and the people are cold.

The Boston Port-Bill is, in fact, a bill to kill Boston. On

and after the first day of June next ensuing, the Custom-house is to be closed—as we close up a dead man's eyes. After twelve o'clock at noon that day, no ship may come in, no sail be unfurled, no ferryman convey so much as a passenger or a pound of sugar over to Charlestown, not a lighter may land hay from the islands, nor a boat bring sand from the hills on the mainland, nor a snow take in iron or timber, nor a float land sheep, nor a farmer bring over his produce. "Boston was; Boston rebelled; Boston is no more;" so it shall be written in the annals of the kingdom beyond the Great Water.

But when Greek joins Greek then comes the tug of war. If Lord North, Granville, Sandwich, Townshend, and even the King himself, were obstinately determined never to give in, and to vindicate British prerogative, the Colonies were quite as obstinately determined never to give in either, and to maintain their rights. No Englishman need be ashamed to read the story of how New England wrestled a fall with Old England and overcame. The Colonists were English too—*cælum non animum mutant qui trans mare currunt*. By Englishmen, Englishmen were worsted in the fight.

The newspapers of the Faction went into mourning. The Tory newspapers lifted up their voices and crowed long and loud. Papers were mysteriously distributed (as had been begun as long ago as February), warning the popular party to pause ere it was too late, and bidding them remember Wat Tyler.

And so on the 1st of June the doors of the Custom-house are shut to the tolling of the bells of Boston; and Governor Hutchinson departs, taking with him the hatred of his native country, for a name which once had a fair prospect of an honourable place among the Governors of Massachusetts.

The closing of the Custom-house doors is, like the opening of those of Janus, a declaration of war. Still persistently taking the pettiest view of the question, as a mere traders' quarrel, the British Government reckons on playing one town against another; Boston's loss is to be Salem's gain.

But the people of Salem, assembled in town-meeting, inform Governor Gage that not only has Nature made Boston a far more convenient port than Salem, but that they abhor the thought of profiting by their neighbour's misfortune. Further, they, with many other towns, appoint a Committee of relief, and generally so comport themselves that the Governor feels that

he has to do with a hydra, whereof, so soon as he cuts off one head, others spring up to defy him. It is true that the friends of Government, with Mr. Harrison Gray among them, present him with an address of regret at the doings of the Mohawks, and offer to help pay for the tea. But the bells of New York have been tolled, and the Bill is being hawked about the streets of that city, printed on mourning paper, and headed,

Barbarous, Cruel, Bloody, and Inhuman Murder.

Worse still, the House of Burgesses of the loyal Province of Virginia has appointed the 1st of June as a solemn fast-day ; for which Lord Dunmore instantly sends them about their business.

The Massachusetts Assembly has been removed to Salem—the last Assembly ever to meet under the Charter. They too wish to appoint a fast-day, and do pass a resolution for a general meeting of Committees from the Provinces, and appoint five of the rankest rebels among them to represent themselves. Finally, they vote five hundred pounds of public money to the said Committee, and when the Governor refuses his assent, pass a resolution “recommending” (a euphemism for “enjoin”) the several towns and districts to raise the money themselves.

They are diligently engaged in passing as many resolutions of a like seditious nature as they possibly can before they are dissolved, when the Governor’s secretary knocks at the door. It so happens, however, that the door is locked ; indeed, Sam Adams has by way of precaution put the key in his pocket. The audacious Assembly send word by the House-messenger that they have ordered the doors to be kept fast. Whereupon Mr. Secretary makes proclamation on the stairs that this Assembly is dissolved—probably the briefest proclamation ever made, having been drawn up in hot haste, to stop the debate as soon as possible.

Mr. Secretary has scarce had time to shake the dust of Salem off his feet, before the Governor hears that a General Congress is to be held in Philadelphia, which may be called a loyal city. That Philadelphia should ask for a Congress is a bad sign indeed. To this Congress, the Massachusetts deputies set forth in a coach-and-four, with two white servants, well mounted and armed, and four blacks in livery behind, two on foot and two on horseback. Sam Adams has been rigged out by his friends for the occasion, in a fashionably-made coat, an elegant cocked hat, and red cloak, with shoe- and knee-buckles, and

gold-headed cane, all complete ; for if "a guinea never glistened in his eyes," it was not because he had too many of them—his estate having never recovered his father's unlucky connection with the Land Bank.

All this time regiments have been coming into Boston and encamping on the common. Boston fairly bristles with warlike preparations ; and people in England write to warn their friends in America of "more to follow ;" of, for instance, at this present moment, seventy-eight thousand guns gone down to Sheerness ready for shipment. There is a strong guard set at Boston Neck. All this is injury—to which Governor Gage adds insult, by issuing on the 4th of August a Proclamation for the Encouragement of Piety and Virtue, containing a particular warning against hypocrisy.

Meanwhile, the "Sons of Liberty" and the other clubs are actively organising future resistance. The clubs meet in garrets, in rooms behind shops, and pretty often in Liberty Hall, under the spreading boughs of the Liberty Tree, which tree has borne a goodly crop of fruit since the Boot with the Devil peeping out of it was hung there in honour of Lord Bute, these ten years since.

The Sons of Liberty—of whom Paul Revere is one—meet at the *Green Dragon* tavern, where they talk about Oliver Cromwell, and remind each other of the Glorious Revolution—swearing at each meeting to reveal nothing which passes but to Adams, Hancock, Dr. Warren, and Dr. Church. Dr. Church, who, like Warren, is a physician, delivered one of the most eloquent orations on the anniversary of the Boston massacre. He is also a poet, and has written many stirring liberty-songs, and has lifted up his voice in the cause of liberty with a passionate fervour almost surpassing the enthusiasm of Warren himself.

For all this, Paul Revere has never quite made up his mind about the Doctor. He seems a "high son of liberty"—as high as any. But unpleasant circumstances are always happening—undoubtedly, some one from time to time informs the Governor of the club proceedings. A well-meaning friend, warning Paul Revere that the way of rebellion leadeth to the gallows, quotes to him certain words used at the last meeting. There is a traitor ; but who is he ? Revere looks round the table, and his eye always comes back to the face of Dr. Church. Possibly his suspicions are prompted by the knowledge that the Doctor's purse is rather low. It is said, too, that he sometimes parodies his own patriotic songs for the delectation of the Tories.

Be this as it may, there are more than enough sincere and honest rebels for the Governor's peace of mind. Gage is sitting upon a mine, which he is doing his best to spring. The people are arming everywhere. Every ship from England brings news of fresh measures of coercion to be adopted, and exasperation runs higher every day. No juries will serve, and the clerks who issued the warrants to summon the jurymen have abjectly apologised for doing so. The Court-houses are thronged by mobs determined to have no sitting. Mr. Hancock was deprived of his commission as Colonel; whereupon the Governor's Cadets disbanded themselves. It is the time of year for the annual muster of the militia—they have been with the utmost difficulty restrained from marching straight on Boston, and "raising the siege," as they call it. In the town, collisions between the soldiers and the people are of almost daily occurrence.

In September, a rumour spreads over half the Continent that Boston is being bombarded. As winter approaches, the selectmen will not allow the carpenters to work at the barracks. There are constant rumours of the seizure of arms and powder; one such seizure was made at Cambridge, and very nearly brought about a rupture.

All this while the General Assembly, sitting in Carpenter's Hall at Philadelphia, is laying the foundation of a nation. Some of the delegates already perceive the scope of what they do; others still think reconciliation possible; but they all work together, and they are gaining time.

CHAPTER XIII.

LIEUTENANT DIGBY ASKS FOR LEAVE.

Boston being, under these circumstances, most consumedly dull, Lieutenant Digby was very well pleased to receive a letter (by the Philadelphia post-rider) from Noel Branzholm, containing a pressing invitation to spend the summer at Oglethorpe. "My mother is writing to Miss Digby," added Noel, "to beg her to honour us by accompanying you; and we may also ask you to do us the favour of allowing my cousin Miss Mary Fleming to travel under your escort, if, as I much fear, my brother cannot get away. Mary nearly always spends her summers with us, and I think will give a good account of us, if

you ask her. Oglethorpe is not so far from your uncle's plantation, as we reckon distance in Virginia, but that you can combine business with what I trust you will not find undeserving the name of pleasure."

Within an hour of receiving this friendly missive, Lieutenant Digby might have been seen diligently employed in mending a pen—an art in which his skill was not conspicuous. However, after sacrificing half-a-dozen goose-quills, he at last succeeded in producing a nib which did not splutter much, and with this he proceeded to indite a respectful request to his Colonel for a six-weeks' furlough, "to go to Virginia on private business."

"I'll say six weeks" he decided, after biting an inch or so off the end of his quill by way of an aid to reflection. "I can ask for an extension afterwards. He couldn't expect private business to take less than six weeks."

Having sanded, folded, sealed, and directed his letter, he left it with his own hands at his Colonel's lodgings, and not till then went to call upon his sister and ascertain her intentions, wondering whether, in case she declined to go—for Fred had a high opinion of his sister's obstinacy—he would be expected to escort Miss Fleming from the outside of the coach, or whether he might with propriety ride inside—always supposing that detestable Yankee fellow did not go too, and spoil everything.

Althea (who had by this time received her own invitation, under cover to Mrs. Maverick) had not the least intention of declining, and appeared surprised when Fred said,—“I shall go; this is a very good opportunity to look up matters in Virginia, and then I can consult Uncle Joe's lawyer in Philadelphia on my way. But, of course, Ally, you aint obliged to go, because I do——”

“Why should I not go?” asked Althea, opening her fine eyes wider in surprise. “Mrs. Branzholm is an old friend of Cousin Maverick's, and I cannot see what excuse I could find for refusing to visit her. Do you see any impropriety in my going?”

“I? bless me! no. I'm sure I can't for the life of me see any,” returned Fred. “I'm sure I never meant——”

“You must have meant something,” persisted Althea, who was annoyed. “I can only suppose you meant to hint that the presence of Mr. Noel Branzholm makes it improper that I should visit his family. I confess——”

"'Pon my soul, Ally, I never meant anything of the kind," protested the luckless Fred, as red as a turkey-cock.

"I am glad you did not, brother," said Althea, with withering calm, "because if we are to be so extraordinary discreet, I wonder you think it proper to visit Oglethorpe while Miss Fleming is there."

"Then she *is* going?" asked Fred, with the slightest possible emphasis on the word "*is*."

"She may not—and probably will not—care to travel under your escort, when she learns that I am declining," said the cruel Althea, relentlessly determined to punish Fred, and now seeing her way to do so effectually.

"But are you not going, Ally? What on earth has made you change your mind? Of course there's no harm—I mean, of course, no one would ever go on a visit anywhere, if they was never to go where there was anybody—and Oglethorpe is like another home to Mary—Miss Fleming, I mean—and why she shouldn't go—or you either, entirely passes my comprehension." As Fred floundered helplessly in the toils of this sentence, Althea watched him with much inward enjoyment. "What an ass I was to say anything!" thought the unhappy Fred. "She'll think now I wanted to prevent *her* going, when all I wanted was to prevent her from wanting to prevent *me* going."

"I am not aware of having changed my mind," remarked Althea, who meant that Fred should pay the uttermost farthing. "'Twas you that raised objections. I have not had time yet to consider. As you say, however, *you* can go. As for Miss Fleming, every one expects 'twill be a match between her and Noel."

Having planted this arrow fairly in the bull's eye, Althea carelessly rose, and observing that she would tell Cousin Maverick Fred was there, left the room with an easy self-possession which completed her brother's discomfiture, leaving that gallant officer a prey to his own self-contempt. "What an ass I was! What a confounded ass!" he thought. "She'd never have thought of refusing, and we might all have fitted in like clockwork. I don't believe Noel cares a pin about Mary Fleming—he's over head and ears in love with Ally. She might do a deal worse. Cousin Maverick says they'll make the Yankees pay for all, and let the rest down easy. I'm sure I don't wish to stand in her way."

Fred had just registered a vow never again, so long as he

lived, to pit his wits against his sister's,—an encounter in which he invariably came off second best, perhaps by reason of her eighteen months' seniority,—when she returned with Mrs. Maverick. Mrs. Maverick took for granted that the invitation would be accepted, and thus opened a dignified retreat to Althea.

"I shall step across and call upon Mrs. Fleming, my dear," said the diplomatic Mrs. Maverick. "Mary is a very charming girl, and there is no objection to you knowing her—in Virginia. But it is perhaps better you should not visit her too often in Boston just at the present crisis of affairs, as her father and cousin are so excessive violent in their opinions, and we ought to mark our disapprobation as much as possible."

Having, as we know, a deeply-rooted antipathy to the person and principles of Mr. Jasper Fleming, the Lieutenant cheerfully acquiesced in this decision.

Noel's letter reached Boston early in June. In it he referred to the Indian troubles as still rumbling in the distance, but as too far away to affect Oglethorpe; but news travelled slowly and uncertainly in those days (though now and then the news of some great calamity would spread with mysterious rapidity), and Noel did not know, when he sent his invitation, that on the 24th of May there had been a shocking affair at a tavern on the banks of the Ohio. A number of Indians had been murdered while drunk—among them a woman—and a fresh impulse was given to outrage. But most of these horrors took place on the far-distant Ohio, and nothing worse than a panic had even yet reached Oglethorpe. But when the party from Boston (of which Jasper Fleming did not form one) arrived at Philadelphia, they found Noel awaiting them with a little troop of those Virginian backwoodsmen, whom their countrymen loved to call "hearts of hickory." In their hunting-shirts and their deer-skin leggings, with hatchet and powder-horn slung over their shoulders, pouch and knife at their sides, and musket in hand, they looked like the sylvan soldiers they were. After the first greetings had been exchanged, Noel explained that news had reached Oglethorpe a few days before, that several members of the family of Logan, the friendly chief of the Cayugas, had been murdered by Captain Cresop. Backwoodsmen were not always careful to make distinctions. The explorers had been robbed; the white men retaliated, and the unoffending family of Logan were the victims. Logan had

sworn to take a terrible revenge ; and although the defences were so well organised that it was extremely improbable any attack would be made so far from the unsettled border-lands, Noel had collected a score or so of his father's troop, and had brought them as an escort across the mountains. They were all mounted on rough serviceable animals, and when they saluted the ladies in military fashion, Althea was reminded of some of the chapters of old romance over which she had pored in her grandmother's library. Nor was Noel in appearance unworthy to be the captain of this gallant little company. "He looks like a young hero riding to the field of honour," she said to Mary, who blushed as red as her own hood at this compliment to her cousin.

"Well, ladies, what say you? Will you brave the perils of the wilderness under our escort, or will you return to Boston until more peaceful times?" asked Noel, when he had explained the situation. Althea looked at Mary. "What do you say, Miss Fleming?" she asked.

"I am not afraid," said Mary. "Noel would not give us our choice if there was any real danger." A speech which was certainly dictated by partiality, for Noel had always had a reputation for being rashness itself—as were all the Branhholms.

"As for me," said Althea, unable to resist giving this home-thrust, but giving it with a smile which disarmed it of its sting, "I may as well go on as go back. If there are Indians in front, there are your Boston friends behind, Mr. Branhholm, who have kept us in daily expectation of smelling powder ever since you left the town."

CHAPTER XIV.

NOBLE SAVAGES.

LIEUTENANT DIGBY begged for a day's delay in Philadelphia, in order to transact some of that business which had brought him so far from home. He was somewhat surprised to find a strong family likeness between Mr. Accepted Ringold, the Philadelphia attorney, and old Jabez Grabley, his father's lawyer. The same love for roundabout words and deeds, and the same professional horror of a straight line, distinguished

them both. Both seemed equally convinced that a straight line is the longest distance between two points, and that your truest course is the zigzag.

So far as lawyer Ringold could be persuaded to express an opinion, however, he appeared to think that the Will would not hold, and that Mr. and Miss Digby must rest their claim on their relationship to the deceased. "But you say his intentions was plain?" asked the Lieutenant, when his mind had opened to receive this idea. "The testator evidently intended you to have the Newbury estate," admitted Mr. Ringold. "But ain't that enough?" urged Fred. "What can you want more than to know what a man means?"

Mr. Ringold inserted his thumbs in his waiscoat armholes (he had laid aside his coffee-coloured coat for greater coolness), and smiled compassionately. "From a soldier's point of view, nothing, my dear sir," he said blandly—"but we require much more in law. However, it is a very pretty case—a very pretty case, indeed—and I fancy the other side would have a good deal of difficulty in proving their point. You see, my dear sir, there are two sides, if not more, to every question——"

"But you say my uncle's intentions are plain," persisted Fred.

Mr. Ringold leaned back farther in his chair, inclined his head to one side, and viewed Fred with a smile of compassionate amusement. "I have very little doubt that so it appears to the military mind, sir," he observed at length; "but if we slapped things right off like that in law, there's no telling what the consequences would be. Military men are members of a profession which is—I'm sure you'll pardon the observation—accustomed to take one-sided views of a subject. Niceness of discrimination, and a habit of carefully weighing the pros and cons, is, I rayer reckon, Lieutenant, incompatible with the profession of arms—or nearly so, nearly so."

It was with a sensation of great relief that Fred quitted the office of Mr. Ringold; and he even observed to Noel that he would rather meet an Indian or two than endure another hour of that eminent attorney's society.

As they rode out of the town,—the ladies in a covered wagon which Noel had provided,—Althea saw for the first time an Indian in all his glory. She had seen some half-breeds in Boston—half-civilised hangers-on at the skirts of civilisation, mongrels in habits as well as in blood; but the train which

met Noel's party, just where the wide streets of Philadelphia joined the wider open country, was arrayed in all the pomp of savage display. An Indian of a magnificent bodily presence and a most dignified countenance marched first. The great fan of feathers set out round his head showed him to be a chief. Many rows of wampum beads hung round his neck, and his furs and blanket all bespoke his rank. In his right hand he bore his musket and spear; a shield, whose boss was the head of the war-eagle, hung on his left arm; and his bow and arrows and axe were slung behind his back. His followers, in their gaudily-striped blankets, and fully armed,—they all carried muskets,—came behind in compact order. All their faces were made fierce by war-paint; but Noel explained to his friends that this was a deputation of the Turtle tribe of Delawares, with Captain White Eyes at their head, come to assure the children of their elder brother Miquon—as they called Penn—of their good-will. They had arrived the day before, and had encamped outside the town. Noel, who had seen Captain White Eyes in his boyhood, hailed him. "Good day, brother Captain White Eyes," he said. "I know you, though you have forgotten me. I am Noel Braxholm of Oglethorpe, beyond the mountains."

"The child grows to the man," said the Indian chief gravely, "but White Eyes does not forget."

"They say you are come to bring us peace, brother," said Noel.

"What peace, where there are wolves?" returned the Sachem. "It is peace with us, but the Sachems of the Five Nations are digging up the war-hatchet; and I have been insulted," he continued, drawing himself up. "The Senecas have said that they have shortened our legs and put petticoats upon us. But am I not full-grown? and are not these the arms of a man?" He raised the musket and the spear as he spoke. "If the Five Nations dig up the hatchet, we will fight for you—we that sprang out of this ground."

Where they stood, they could see the broad water of the Delaware, with the woods on the other side.

"Farewell, brother," said Captain White Eyes, preparing to resume his march into the city; "and when you come to your father's wigwam beyond the mountains, tell him to beware of Captain Pipe; he is a Wolf, and his heart is a wolf's heart."

"Surely this is the noble savage in person!" said Althea, when the Indians had gone on their way.

"The Delawares are mostly friendly," replied Noel; "but Captain Pipe, chief of the Wolf tribe, is a devil incarnate; and he would even join with his enemies of the Five Nations to feed his pride and ambition. But Cornstalk, the Shawnee chief, is the worst; and that tribe is the fiercest of all. They boast they have killed ten times as many Englishmen as any other tribe, and 'tis their chief that stirs up all the others."

"I confess I wonder you seem to make 'em of so much account," observed Lieutenant Digby, whose warlike eye had taken the measure of the red men. "Sure a dozen British soldiers could put a hundred of 'em to the rout in five minutes, with their bows and arrows, and their clumsy old matchlocks? It has ever been a mystery to me how poor General Braddock was so shamefully defeated by them."

"I can tell yer that, Mr. Digby," unceremoniously broke in the oldest man in the troop, a grizzled weather-beaten old fellow, with quick restless eyes. "I was there, an' I'll tell yer eg-zack-erly how it come about. It come about, Mr. Digby, because Gen'ral Braddock thought as how Injuns warn't no account. That there melanchol-ly affair, sir, come about en-tirely along o' the Gen'ral despisin' the enemy, instid o' tryin' to find out how to beat him."

Fred was not ready in conversation, and much as he would have liked to desire the backwoodsman to mind his own business (the only reply which occurred to him in time to be available), there was something about that veteran which he hardly cared to tackle. So he swallowed his wrath, and also his curiosity—for he would have much liked to know what *was* the way to beat Indians, but was too proud to ask a common fellow who had presumed to break in on the conversation of gentlemen. Althea, however (who reserved her pride for great occasions), put the question for him.

"Why, Ma'am," said the old backwoodsman, "it lays in a nut-shell. Yer must arl-ways be *ready* for 'em. Never be surprised. Have yer men under arms at least an hour afore daybreak—for they never attack a big force at night, though they'll cut off a small party. Move in close order; no stragglin'. And the Gen'ral's everything; he's a good deal in or'nary warfare, but agin Injuns, a Gen'ral's everything. Numbers is no use whatever to a fool, or a man that don't understand Injuns' way o' fightin'. And then, as the Scriptur' says, 'Watch,' for in such an hour as ye think not the enemy shall spring out o' the very

ground ; an' then where'll yer be, if yer've got to run back a furlong or two to fetch yer arms? Yer must sleep with one ear cocked, an' one eye open, an' yer musket loaded by yer side, if yer want to keep yer scalp on when Injuns is around."

These military instructions (which the veteran evidently intended for the ear of the British officer) derived a fearful interest from the wild and lonely character of the mountain-road up which the cavalcade was toiling as the sun went down. The forests on either side made it already dark enough for night to seem come, and yet light enough for the fancy to conjure up all sorts of gliding shapes behind the trees. Suddenly, they came on a swampy tract, rich in marsh-flowers, but, even in that summer season, singularly autumnal and gloomy. The hills sloped up very gradually, leaving a large space of undulating valley, over which hung a light-gray mist. About the middle of this wide valley, was a high grassy ledge, on which could be seen several rows of mounds. Noel told Miss Digby that these were Indian graves.

CHAPTER XV.

"FRUITFULEST VIRGINIA."

BUT that the wildness and loneliness of the region through which their road lay, disposed the minds of the travellers to believe almost anything that was told them, they might have been inclined to smile at Noel's precautions. The only incidents of the journey were the halts at the few and lonely taverns, where entertainment of the rudest kind was provided for man and beast ; the changes of landscape and climate as they toiled along the mountain defiles ; and a terrific thunderstorm which befell them during the second night—and which nearly swept away the log cabin (called an inn by the necessity of travellers) in which they were sleeping.

Once, at a cross-road, they came on a sorry sight—a gang of slaves being driven home from Maryland, where they had been bought. First came a small cart drawn by a single horse, in which were half-a-dozen naked black children, tumbled all together, and squirming like so many pigs. Three women marched behind the cart, with heads, necks, and breasts bare, and bare-footed. Then three men, chained together with an ox-chain. Last, rode a white man, with pistols in his belt.

"'Tis an ugly sight," said Noel, answering Fred's look of disgust. "You shall see none such at Oglethorpe, I promise you. We seldom sell our slaves, and never this way."

The long June twilight was fading fast when, on the next evening, the cavalcade began the steep descent to the Shenandoah; but the moon had just risen over the eastern ridge, and the valley was full of a dazzling perplexing shimmer, which the ladies thought very beautiful and romantic. But Fred, who had been unusually thoughtful on the journey, and towards its close had ridden beside the old backwoodsman (whose name was Meshach Pike), listening very attentively to all he said, observed to Noel; "'Tis pretty enough, but I should have no fancy for fighting by this glittering deceitful light, which shows you nothing plainly, and yet makes you think you see everything."

"An hour before dawn is the time they choose," said Noel, "when the watch is tired, and the sleepers are heaviest with sleep."

They had given notice of their approach by the winding of horns, and presently a little procession of torches began to move down the opposite valley. Althea was reminded of a scene in *Oroonoko*. The swarthy faces, with teeth and eyes gleaming in the torch-light, the river rippling and dashing in the bottom, the dark trees and the darker clefts of the mountains—all looked unreal, like the confusion of a dream. But the warmth of the reception brought her back to reality—or as near to reality as we ever are in a new and unfamiliar place. One could almost think that memory is the only reality—so unreal does everything seem until it has cast root in memory.

* * * * *

When the guests, lighted hospitably to their rooms by their hosts, had said the last of many good-nights, and the long corridors were still, Althea stole out and knocked at Mary's door. "Let me come in," she said. "I must see some one that I know, to make sure I am here." She came in and sat down at the open window by Mary. The valley was full of a shimmering light, which turned the river to silver. The awful heights of the mountains, made more awful by the inky blackness of the pines, seemed to rise higher as she watched them, until she could almost imagine that they were advancing through the sultry summer night, like some vast moving army. The air was heavy with the sweetness of the flowers.

"It is a dream, Mary," said Althea; "we shall awake in the morning, and find ourselves back in Boston."

"I think 'tis Boston seems more like a dream to me," said Mary—not without a slight pang ; for she fancied that she knew what it was that cast such a glamour over the Virginian landscape for Althea's eyes.

"Oh, Boston is real enough !" said Althea, with a sigh. "I was always in a bad humour in Boston—though I'm sure I can't tell why—but here I will be an angel !"

Noel, however, would scarcely have endorsed this declaration. Miss Digby was, it is true, in a very gracious and equable humour. Mary sadly told herself that every one *must* see how charming she was ; but although her open brow and smiling mouth seemed to say, "Thus far shalt thou come," there was a something in her eyes, when they were most kind, which added, "but no farther." At least they added this to Noel. To Mary, Althea was affectionate, even demonstrative. "I wish you was my sister, Mary," she said to-night, as they sat at the window. "I never had a sister, and ever since my mother died, I have wished I had had one. I love you dearly, Mary ! I doubt you think I'm proud, but 'tis all put on—I don't mind telling you—to hide the weakness I feel within. Tell me, Mary, do you never feel weak ?"

"I do not think I have been much tried yet," said Mary—but there was a pathetic tone in her voice as she said it, and Althea fancied the moon, which just then slipped out of a little fleece of cloud, sparkled too brightly in her eyes. "Life has gone very gently with me," continued Mary. "I have only had such little clouds as that one over against the moon, which will presently vanish away among the stars. But I've imagined some things that might be too hard for me—things which might—— But these are mere foolish fancies," she said, suddenly throwing off the pensive mood into which Althea's question had beguiled her. "All our lives must have some dark hours, and I shall have mine ; but we will not spoil to-night with thinking of them before they come."

"You are so happy here, Mary ; you are not plagued with thinking you are only here in a dream. But I know why I feel this sadness," Althea sighed ; "'tis because this country-house, unlike as it is, yet reminds me of my own old home."

"It must have been enough to break your heart to leave it," said Mary, pressing her friend's hand in sympathy. "I would mine, to think I should see this place no more. I always loved the mountains ; 'tis more like a dream to me *not* to see them.

"I hope I shall awake and find myself here." She laughed as she said it.

Althea looked at her two or three times, and then looked away to the misty valley. "There was an old book of poetry," she said, "in my dear grandmother's library, that I used to read. It was very long, and I never quite understood the story, but I remember some of the verses. There was one stanza I remember; it has run in my head all day:

It was an hill placed in an open plain,
That round about was bordered with a wood
Of matchless height, that seemed the earth to disdain;
In which all trees of honour stately stood,
And did all winter as in summer bud,
Spreading pavilions for the birds to bower
Which in their lower branches sung aloud;
And in their tops the soaring hawk did tower,
Sitting like king of fowls in majesty and power;
And at the foot thereof a gentle flood,
His silver waves did softly tumble down.

"I think this place is something like it," said Althea. "There was something, too, about 'fruitfulest Virginia,' and how for so many ages this land was blooming, and no man knew of it. Well, we are here now. This is our day, let us make the most of it, for, as I read in the same old book:

So passeth in the passing of a day,
Of mortal life the leaf, the bud, the flower.

"Good-night, Mary; I shall go and dream of 'fruitfulest Virginia.'"

After Althea had gone, Mary sat long at the window, thinking about a great many things, past, present, and to come, but always returning to the thought that every one would say Althea and Noel were made for each other.

CHAPTER XVI.

ARMIES IN THE CLOUDS.

MRS. BRANXHOLM, who dearly loved a little gaiety, had scarcely welcomed her guests, before she began to contrive festivities for them. There must be a ball, and the sooner the better, that Lieutenant Digby and his sister might be introduced to as many of their neighbours as possible.

With this end in view, a mighty commotion set in in the kitchen; Nebuchadnezzar's own peculiar satellites were to be seen, zealously polishing up every bit of silver or brass which the house contained; and for a couple of days an unsavoury odour, carried by the breeze into the upper windows, proclaimed that a batch of candles was being made in a remote outhouse.

At last the day arrived. The house was swept and garnished, and the new-made candles placed all ready for lighting on every available ledge and shelf of the two large rooms in which the dancing was to take place. A couple of wandering fiddlers, who had happened to pass by a week ago, had been detained for the occasion, and the supper was to be served in one of the kitchens, which a skilful arrangement of screens and curtains had turned into a capital supper-room.

Many of the guests arrived on horseback—some with their ballroom attire strapped behind them in a valise. Even some of the ladies travelled thus, their hoops arranged behind them, and looking, as they trotted up to the house, like ships with lateen sails. But only the nearest guests came thus—those from greater distances drove for the most part in four-wheeled chaises. The stables were soon nearly as full of four-legged guests as the ballroom was of two-legged, and the whole plantation was alive.

When Althea came down, dressed in an elegant flowered negligee of the palest puce, over a bishop of very moderate dimensions, Mrs. Branhholm congratulated herself on having left off her own hoop. Mrs. Branhholm's own gown was a very fine gauze, with gray flowers and orange spots on it, made with a stomacher over an orange satin petticoat, and became her very well. Nor were the gentlemen behindhand in finery. Colonel Branhholm appeared in his uniform of blue and red, and Lieutenant Digby had, after much painful thought, himself decided that a man never looks better than in military dress. But he almost wished that he had put on a certain white silk coat and breeches (which, together with a pale-blue embroidered waistcoat, had produced a considerable effect at Bath only last autumn, and might very well pass muster in Virginia as the latest fashion), when he saw Noel leading out his sister for the first quadrille, while the fiddlers tuned their fiddles.

"He's a confounded handsome fellow," thought Fred, as he made a leg, and asked for the honour of Miss Fleming's hand in the quadrille. Miss Fleming graciously placed her hand in

the broad palm which the Lieutenant extended—and which held her with a grasp unnecessarily firm—and asked him as they took their places if a ball in England was anything like this ?

“The pump-room at Bath is larger,” says the Lieutenant,—thinking that white brocade and a carnation knot at the breast is sure the most becoming thing possible for a woman to wear. “But I have never seen handsomer women than are here to-night.”

The Lieutenant looked so hard at Mary as he said this that she could not help blushing a little ; and to cover her self-consciousness she observed that Miss Digby was certainly the belle of the evening.

“She is an uncommon fine girl—has always been considered so,” said Fred ; “and then she’s got such a spirit ! But there’s other ladies here to-night that I think full as handsome as Ally.”

“How well she and Noel look standing up together !” said Mary presently.

Noel had powdered his hair, and his fine complexion was amazingly set off by it. His white satin waistcoat and breeches, and peach-bloom coat, displayed his figure to great advantage, and the thought occurred to Fred that he would be a formidable rival, and that it was lucky he was so taken up with Ally as to have eyes for no other woman. With the nearest approach to malice of which he was capable, he observed to his partner, watching her face as he spoke, that Noel was more in his element here than his brother would be.

“Jasper is of a graver temper naturally,” rejoined Mary calmly ; “but I have danced with him many a time.”

“The devil you have !” thought the Lieutenant, turning his partner almost savagely, as he saw in imagination Jasper’s arm round the waist he was himself clasping. “I beg your pardon, Miss Fleming—I fancied I felt you slip,” he said, ashamed of his roughness.

Perhaps Althea was not quite as insensible as she professed to be to masculine attractions. At any rate, she talked and laughed with Noel, until he was in the seventh heaven. Then, when she saw that he was on the point of a serious declaration, she suddenly exclaimed that she was tired, and sat down beside Mary. It might have been a mere coincidence—but at that moment the fiddles had struck up *Yankee Doodle*, and Noel fancied that Miss Digby looked annoyed.

The droppings of the candles (which would have been all the firmer if they had not been so lately made) presently drove Mary and Althea from their seat, and Althea proposed that they should step out on the verandah and enjoy the coolness a little.

It was a sultry night. The heavens were obscured by a thin veil of clouds, through which only the very brightest of the stars were dimly visible.

"How oppressive it is!" said Mary; "I can scarce breathe. And what an odd red light there is in the north!"

Althea looked, and saw a curious dusky glow slowly spreading over the highest clouds. It could hardly be caused by a fire on the mountains, for their outlines lay as dark and vague as ever against the sky. While the girls were watching it, Lieutenant Digby came out. By that time, the glow had spread over the entire sky—brightening every moment, until the heavens seemed ablaze. It had been perceived by Mrs. Branhholm—who had cried that a comet was coming—and all the guests were crowding out in front of the house.

The light was now so brilliant, that shapes could be traced in the clouds—moving masses passing from east to west. With a common movement, Althea and Mary drew closer together, and put each an arm round the other's waist.

"What is it?" whispered Mary, awe-stricken. "What are those clouds like horses?"

At this instant Noel came hastily out on to the verandah. "I have been searching for you everywhere!" he began. "Have you seen it? What is it?"

"Hush!" said Althea, pointing to the east. "It is an army marching—I see the artillery!"

As they looked all present saw the semblance of an army marching through the clouds—cavalry, artillery, baggage-wagons—all plainly to be distinguished, while the blaze of that strange splendour spread wider and wider, the shapes grew clearer and clearer, and the shadowy banners waved above the cloudy host.

"There goes a body of dragoons," said Fred, under his breath. "By heaven, I could fancy I make out British uniforms! But what are these troops that come behind?"

For, following close on the heels of the first army, came another, with serried ranks, under a broad banner, on which Mary thought she saw a device like a pine-tree. The two armies seemed to join battle—the ghostly phalanxes swayed to

and fro, while the blood-red light grew more lurid, and the awe-struck spectators fancied they saw the gleam of steel. Then the ranks of the first host broke, and seemed to flee, while the second seemed to pursue. All across the expanse of heaven raged that shadowy conflict, until the last of the pursuing host was lost to sight beyond the western mountains, and there was a sound like a long-drawn sigh as the watchers drew their breath.

"You saw it?" said Noel, laying his hand on Althea's arm. Even in the fading of that mysterious glow he could see that she was as pale as death—but her eyes met his without flinching.

"I saw it," she said. "Thank God, it was but in the clouds!"

At supper, all the talk was of portents and prodigies. Many of the speakers inclined to the belief that the phenomenon they had just witnessed was a warning that a great Indian war was at hand. Noel, who was sitting next Miss Digby, looked at her steadily, and said in a low voice, "Those were no Indians that we saw fighting in the clouds."

He said it with a desperate feeling that it would be cowardly to hold his peace. Althea did not reply; but an involuntary feeling of respect awoke in her. She had told herself many times that he was a pretty, amiable boy; but she was beginning to see that he had some share of his elder brother's temper, and she did not like him the less for it. It was with a very gracious smile that she allowed him to lead her out in the contra-dance which was called for after supper.

CHAPTER XVII.

DAYS IN ARCADIA.

THERE followed three or four weeks of a life so perfect, that Althea said they were not in Virginia but in Arcadia. Once or twice the heavens clouded over, and some lightnings flashed across the valley, while the thunder pealed from peak to peak; but the skirts only of the storms swept over Oglethorpe, and left the landscape more laughing than before. A few rumours, too, came from time to time from beyond the river; but these died away like the storms. An old Indian chief, named Bald

Eagle, paid a visit to Oglethorpe, and sat for some days smoking his pipe in the sun, by the juniper tree, near the slaves' quarter, steadfastly watched by Polyphemus, and less persistently by old Uncle Memnon—who, having once belonged to Lord Baltimore, was a sort of Sir Oracle, to whom even Nebuchadnezzar paid some deference. Uncle Memnon took a vast fancy to Miss Digby—who was, he declared, the very moral picture of a young lady he had waited on when he was in my Lord Baltimore's service. To her he confided his sense of his own superiority to the other niggers. "Dey means well," he would say, leaning on his stick, and shaking his snow-white head at her—he was a little man, and bent by age, and he was obliged to look up at Miss Digby. "Bress you, my dear young lady, dey means well; but dey don' *know*—dey *can't* know. Nebuchadnezzar, now—he tink he mighty fine nigger; I 'scuse him, Miss Digby, 'cos it's *nat'ral*. It all comes o' not seein' de worl': ef I not see de worl', I jes' like Nebuchadnezzar. Sho' you, Miss Digby, I *jes* like him."

Miss Digby gravely replied that she had learned a great deal in Virginia.

"I don' go fer to say as dere aint a deal to larn in Virginny," observed Uncle Memnon; "but dere's some as will go on tinkin' bars an' wolves o' dereselves, when dey hadn't oughtn't to tink mo'n mice an' sparrers."

Uncle Memnon uttered these strictures with entire unconsciousness that he did not by any means think mice and sparrows of himself.

The country seemed so quiet, as the summer went on, that Colonel Branhholm resolved to go to Williamsburg. Those were momentous days for the Virginian House of Representatives—a few votes more or less on either side might determine the attitude of the Province. Oglethorpe was far removed from the unsettled border; and there were several companies of militia under the redoubtable Meshach Pike, Fred's instructor in woodland warfare, and other veterans as tough as he. So, with some misgivings, the Colonel set off early one fine July morning, with a very small escort, being unwilling to take too many men from Oglethorpe. Nebuchadnezzar was grievously disappointed at the poorness of the show. He would have had the whole three companies marshalled in the Old Cane Brake (where the Colonel exercised his men); and was disgusted to see his master ride off with no more attendance than a receiver. "Dey's white, but

dey ain't no 'count," he observed with much contempt to Uncle Memnon. "Can't tink what Mas' Ederd tinkin' of, ridin' off's ef he was ashamed o' bein' seen."

"De Colonel knows as dere's Injuns about," said Uncle Memnon. "An' de Colonel berry well—him mighty well, but you can't expect him to ride 'bout de country like Lord Baltimore."

When Uncle Memnon got out Lord Baltimore, Nebuchadnezzar generally heard himself called. "Lord Baltimore, he mout be all berry well, I don't say he moutn't," he began; and then—as though a distant sound had at that instant struck on his ear—"Bress me, ef dat ar ain't Mas'r Noel a-callin'—orright, Uncle Memnon, I tell you de res' bineby. Comin', Mas'r Noel, sar!"

With this he hurried off, fondly believing that Uncle Memnon would think he had had a crushing rejoinder ready, had time but allowed. But Uncle Memnon knew better. "Ha! ha!" would that venerable retainer of the late Governor of Maryland chuckle to himself, as he watched the retreating form of Nebuchadnezzar. "Dat nigger tink *I* tink he got suffin' ever so clever for ter say 'f he like—'s if I didn' know he make hisself call a-puppus, cos he got *nuffin'* ter say! Dat ar nigger is so fond o' braggin'—can't cure him nohow."

The departure of Colonel Branzholm threw the little party still more together; and as Mr. Butler was also gone to Williamsburg—engaged in an unofficial attempt to persuade the House to a compromise—Oglethorpe was left more dependent on its own resources than usual. But Fred at least did not regret this. The unrestrained intercourse of country life had convinced him more firmly than ever that Mary Fleming was much too good for any Yankee, and especially too good for her cousin Jasper. The Lieutenant's mind was slow, but tenacious. Having once got it well into his head that Mary was uncommonly fond of Jasper, he was incapable of even imagining that Noel might be the favoured object—perhaps Mary as yet hardly knew this herself, but Althea had guessed it long ago. Fred hoped that Althea, who was confoundedly coy with Noel, would come round sooner or later. He did not think he was precisely in love with Mary himself—he was simply actuated by the praiseworthy intention of preventing her from throwing herself away on that long-nosed fellow in Boston. With this view he made himself agreeable, and he found virtue its own

reward—although he wished sometimes that Althea would not stick quite so close to Mary. She did it to avoid a *tête-à-tête* with Noel, but it was hard on Fred never to get a word with Mary alone.

One afternoon, the two girls were sitting at the open window of the dining-room. The day was very hot—too hot, they said, to go out. Noel had promised Fred to go shooting, but he still lingered. The table had been cleared, and the dessert was set on the mahogany, and Mrs. Branhholm was taking a siesta.

Althea (who was not in her usual spirits that day) declared she should soon be asleep too if she did not do something, and getting up, began to examine the queer prints of the Months which adorned the walls. There was January, with muff and tippet, tripping on her wintry way; March, with skirts flying in the wind; July, with a large fan, and ruffled elbows; and August, in a great flapping hat, with a wheat-sheaf in her arms. Underneath August stood an old oak table—round when it was fully open, but now only one flap was up. A curious old desk stood on it, and a leaden inkstand. "My grandmother had just such an inkstand as this," said Althea, taking it up, and examining it very attentively. "I was once sent to bed for upsetting it. In England, old-fashioned things seem natural, but here they make me melancholy. I wish we did not grow old! I wish inkstands that dead and gone people have used did not last so long after their fingers are dust!"

"Would you have all trace of the past vanish away?" asked Noel.

"I?" said Althea. "I hoard every ribbon that was my mother's—I have all sorts of trumpery that once belonged to her—'tis near as good as ever, and she has been dead seven years! I could hate these foolish relics of her for outlasting her, and yet I love them because they were hers."

Both her hearers were surprised. Althea rarely spoke with so much emotion.

"What do you say, Mary? You are more reasonable than I. Do you ever think of death?"

"Not often," answered Mary, after an instant's hesitation. "At least, not in that way. I think perhaps we should not think of it too much, except to love the people that belong to us all the more, because death must part us some day."

"I knew you would say that, Mary," said Althea. "You

are like a clear brook—all your thoughts set the same way; mine run a dozen ways at once, and give me no peace! Did you ever hate anybody, Mary? Did you ever see her angry, Mr. Branzholm?"

"Many times," said Noel, laughing. "And she has even boxed my ears—'twas once when I had torn up Jasper's copy-book in a rage."

"And I suppose, as a philosopher, Jasper could not box your ears himself?" said Miss Digby, rather spitefully.

"Nay," said Noel, "he was furious—he stood over me with the torn leaves in his hand, and cried, 'If I wasn't bigger than you, I'd annihilate you for this!' Then he went out of the room, and Mary came up to me, and said, 'I'm not bigger than you, so I shall punish you!' and dealt me the sharpest box on the ear I ever had in my life."

Every one laughed at this story, and Althea seemed to have recovered her spirits. She returned to her seat by the window, and, somehow or other, the talk turned to love. Noel (who had his private reasons for the opinion) declared he believed that all women were no more capable of loving than of speaking French.

"I hope the one accomplishment is less rare than the other," said Mary gravely.

"He is too young to know anything about it," said Althea, leaning back in her chair, and letting her eyes roam far away from Noel—away, across the valley, to where the road was lost among the leafy beeches and maples.

"We all have our own way of loving," she said presently. "There are as many ways of loving as of doing anything else. When you love, Mary, you will do it in a fashion as generous as your heart. There will be no caprice in your affection. You will be like the summer sunshine, always warm and kind. 'Twould shock you to be suspected or doubted, and you would almost as soon be false as be suspicious yourself. Yet, woe to him who should deceive you—you would be inexorable to falsehood!"

"You paint me too terrible," said Mary, flushing a little. "I am not so unforgiving as you think."

"You would be more merciful to mere weakness than I," returned Althea, allowing her eyes to rest for a moment on Noel, and then looking straight at Mary. "You would, I'm certain, forgive a hundred times easier than I should—weakness,

folly, error—all but falsehood. Your own strength makes you merciful.”

“You have said a great deal of me,” said Mary, laughing, but a little embarrassed. “Pray let us know what is *your* way?”

Althea’s own cheek flushed a little; but she leaned back still more lazily, as she replied, “I am, as I often tell you, a perverse wretch. There’s something in me that’s always getting the better of me. I sometimes wish I was like Fred. Fred’s head is not much to boast of. He believes himself to be prodigiously shrewd, because he hath no understanding of poetry, and always falls asleep in the sermon; but a child could out-manceuvre him. But his heart is all made of fine gold—no, ’tis made of much better—’tis made of human kindness. I am not blind; I know he is thick-headed, but his stupidity is of the sort which some cleverer folks might envy.” She looked full at Noel as she spoke.

At this moment, the voice of the young gentleman in question was heard calling Noel.

“If we are to get two hours’ shooting, we must start at once,” he said, putting his head in at the door. “But perhaps the ladies will come for a stroll instead—we might go along the river——”

Noel, however, did not second this proposal. He had an odd dislike of late to the ladies going much beyond the limits of the plantation. “Why, what danger can there be?” Fred had asked over and over again. “I’ve seen no one worse than poor old Bald Eagle, and his worst fault is, that he is a little too fond of bumbo and sangree.” And Noel always replied, “No danger in the world, or I would not have them here; but they are just as well near home.”

This brief dialogue took place for the twentieth time on the present occasion; and if Althea had been disposed to rebel, Mary’s unhesitating acquiescence made this impossible. But when the gentlemen were gone, she said, somewhat maliciously: “I protest, Mary, you are too docile! You will spoil Noel.”

“This was too serious a matter,” replied Mary. “There is, I think, very little danger in this part of the country; but if there happened to be any hostile Indians near us, the danger would be increased a hundredfold by the presence of women. The men would be hampered—and the Indians would know that, and be all the more ready to attack them.”

“You are a good girl, Mary, and you act exactly as I said

you would," said Althea. She had turned her chair round, so that she could watch the road.

"You described me at such length, 'tis only fair you should say a word or two about yourself," observed Mary. "You turned the subject very neatly, and sang your brother's praises very sisterly just now—I saw your motive!"

"So sisterly, that I thought your cousin was but half pleased."

"Noel is incapable of such littleness!" exclaimed Mary, coming into the window and standing there, looking towards the river. The two figures had just come in sight. Fred turned, and seeing the ladies in the window, waved his hat, and Noel followed his example.

"What is your way of loving, since you know so much about mine?" asked Mary, facing round upon Althea. Althea clasped her hands behind her head, and sat looking the picture of provocation.

"So far as I yet know," she said, with a defiant yet careless smile, "'tis very much the same as my way of hating. I'm convinced that if I ever love, I must begin with hating—none of your mild dislikes, but a good downright detestation. He must offend my pride, my prejudices—everything but my taste. What he must think of me I cannot tell—but I think he must admire and disapprove me. I shall, as I say, begin by hating. Then, by slow and reluctant degrees, I shall be forced to respect him a little—for which I shall take my revenge, by hating him worse than ever. Then I shall hate myself; and at last—at last—I shall—think I ought perhaps to have loved him!"

"He is scarce to be envied, I think," remarked Mary drily.

"Lord bless you, child! long before that time he will have married a beautiful gentle creature who will adore him, and I shall be old and faded." Althea looked triumphantly young and blooming as she said this.

"You look as if you could never be old, and I am sure you will always be beautiful," said Mary. "And I will not believe you are as heartless as you would have me think; 'tis plain, at least, you have meditated on the subject——"

"As for that, I never yet saw the man that was worth so much trouble," said Althea. She paused a moment, then added—" 'Twas a shadow that set me thinking thus—a shadow I saw one dark night at sea. Indeed I half believe 'twas a ghost, for 'twas nothing real."

CHAPTER XVIII.

"KING PHILIP IS COMING!"

THE Arcadian days came to a sudden end, as Arcadian days generally do. That hot blazing afternoon was the last of them.

The first alarm was given by Polyphemus. The three ladies were sitting later on in the afternoon, taking their coffee on the verandah. Suddenly, a dark shadow passed above them, and there was a rattle of claws and wings as the raven alighted on the eave, and croaked out a quick succession of disjointed sentences,—“Look out! Don't be a fool! Make haste!” winding up by a sentence he rarely used,—“King Philip's coming!”

“Good heavens!” exclaimed Mrs. Branhholm, upsetting half her coffee on her white dress in her agitation. “Did you hear that? He never says it unless he has seen Indians!”

“Poor old Bald Eagle, perhaps,” said Mary. “Polyphemus, come here, and have a rusk.”

Polyphemus was much perturbed. He liked rusks, but he had been caught by the glint of a silver tea-spoon, and if he liked rusks, he adored silver spoons. After a little hesitation, he scuffled down to the low balustrade and accepted the rusk.

Suddenly, a distant shot was heard. Polyphemus had begun to remark again that King Philip was coming, when he remembered that his only chance of securing the spoon was by effacing himself, and feigning not to see it—whereupon he applied with redoubled vigour to the rusk. He was rewarded. After stirring her coffee with the object of his desires, Mrs. Branhholm absently laid it on the table instead of in the saucer—remarking as she did so that they ought to return very soon now, for the shot was not far off. Polyphemus noted the action, though he appeared to be exclusively occupied with his rusk; but Virginian housekeepers were not strict about trifles, and the spoon was not missed until Polyphemus was surprised a month after, lost in ecstatic contemplation of his booty, as it lay, with half-a-dozen other abstracted articles, in the hollow of a tree.

Meanwhile, Mrs. Branhholm had left her coffee untasted, and had gone to the end of the verandah, to look out over the

valley, and try to pierce the thickest of the forests with her anxious gaze.

But the sun had long gone down behind Cedar Gap, and the deep orange glow had faded from the sky, and one after another the stars had come out, like calm eyes unclosing, and the cool of evening had succeeded to the thirsty heat of day, before Noel and Fred and the two servants they had taken with them returned. They said they were tired, and they looked pale and weary, and did not talk much at supper. They had shot nothing, though they had been all the way round by the Gap.

They did not tell the ladies that they had gone three or four miles lower down the river, to where a larger stream came to swell the waters of the Shenandoah. On this other stream they saw a canoe with an Indian in it; as it came nearer Noel noticed that the canoe seemed to be drifting with the current, which there ran very swiftly. As it drifted nearer, he recognised Bald Eagle, sitting bolt upright and motionless. The canoe swept rapidly past within thirty yards of where Noel was standing. Fred was just saying,—“How stiff he sits up!” when Noel seized his arm, and exclaimed in a horrified voice,—“Good God! he is dead! He has been scalped!”

The canoe had drifted far down the now united streams before either of the spectators recovered from the shock of this ghastly sight. Fortunately, the servants had fallen behind and so did not see it.

“Who can have done it? Poor old fellow; he was harmless enough!” said Fred. And Noel replied,—“Whoever did it, did it by way of reprisal, and two can play at that game. But it can hardly have been done near here, or we should have heard of it; and he has evidently been dead some days. Well, keep it close or we shall have a panic. I wish my father was not away.”

All precautions against panic were, however, rendered useless next day. It was Sunday, and they all went to church as usual. Oglethorpe was less solitary than it looked. A considerable population inhabited the villages on the borders of the river, and the town of Winchester was distant but a long day's ride.

On this Sunday morning, the ladies packed themselves into the venerable machine which had so narrowly escaped destruction in the Shadow of Death, the gentlemen mounted their

horses (Fred had the happiness to bestride a very spirited roan, who would, he trusted, efface the sorrel from Miss Fleming's memory), Nebuchadnezzar brought up the rear with a dusky cavalcade under his own immediate leadership, and Uncle Memnon was left in command at Oglethorpe. "Hurry up, you black niggers!" cried Nebuchadnezzar with unnecessary zeal, as there was plenty of time. "What de ladies say ef you late to chu'ch?" Being several shades blacker than any of his squadron, Nebuchadnezzar invariably addressed them as "black niggers."

The village was but five miles off, and the church stood at the end of the long straggling street. It was a neat stone building, almost hidden in a grove of oaks. Althea had come to love this little church, where she heard the familiar prayers of the English liturgy, said to an accompaniment of rustling boughs and chirping birds. The Oglethorpe pew was close to a window, which in summer was always open. Althea could see the river through an opening in the trees; and across the river more mountains, where sometimes she could watch the clouds caught like torn fleeces on the branches of the pines.

But to-day there was an unwonted commotion in the broad white village street. Groups of people were standing in the middle of the road. A knot of stolid Germans from the next village were gathered opposite the tavern; while, close by, Meshach Pike was leaning on his musket—occasionally turning round to spit. As soon as he saw the Oglethorpe chariot ploughing the village dust he straightened himself, spat twice in exactly the same spot, adjusted his musket to his shoulder, and stepped briskly to meet that vehicle.

"It's a-gettin' pretty nigh us, Mr. Branzholm," he said, as he came up. "As the people was a-comin' to church this mornin', they saw Jedidiah Vine lyin' dead across his own threshold, an' a Injun a little way off, dead too."

In the history of the Province there were too many such stories of sudden destruction—sometimes befalling whole villages—for any one to hear this news without a thrill of personal fear. Noel hastily glanced round at his own little company.

"Ten of us," he said, "and three women. The road back is pretty open, and it will be broad daylight. Meshach, is all your company here under arms?"

"Wal, Mr. Branzholm, I reckon as they will be by the time parson's done his sarmon't," said Meshach slowly. "I s'pose

yer'll go to church now you *are* here? Seems kinder pity like—waste, as ye might say. An', then again, 't 'ud kinder give time to my men to come up. An', ef so be as we was to be attacked, the meet'n'-house is jest 's good a place to defend as e'er another. An', for the matter o' that, the Lord delivered Hadley on the Sabbath-day."

Having laid this odd medley of considerations before Noel, Meshach fell back on the footpath, adjusted a fresh quid of tobacco in his cheek, and leaning his chin on his musket, resumed his former attitude—eyes and ears alert, like an old watch-dog.

On emergencies, Mrs. Branhholm always threw off her indolent carelessness, and vindicated the fame of her spirited ancestress. On the present occasion, as soon as she heard what had happened, she proposed that the women and children should take refuge on the plantation. As she was speaking, an express rode in from one of the frontier-forts to say that Cornstalk and Red Eagle had taken the war-path. The express, whose clothes were torn and dusty, had been fired at as he rode out of the fort, and had had a narrow escape. He did but stay to snatch a hasty meal and change his worn-out horse for a fresh beast, before he rode on to Winchester.

A brief and strange service was held in the little church. The congregation was far too numerous to be contained inside, and the churchyard was crowded. Sentinels had been posted at every point of approach, and there was a watcher up in the steeple. What the prayers lacked in length they made up in fervour. The parson—a small spare man, pale and feeble in appearance, but whose voice rose so clear through the still air of the summer morning that every word he said reached the listeners outside the church—gave a short exhortation, and was pronouncing the benediction, when a strange rustling sound was heard, and the scared worshippers, looking up, saw the air darkened by a vast flight of birds. "'Tis they darned pidjins," muttered Meshach Pike to Noel, by whose side he stood. "King Philip's pidjins—they allus come when there's mischief afoot."

The mysterious ill-omened flock passed over the village, going towards Winchester. Every eye followed them, until the last straggler was lost above the distant forest. For more than a hundred years, these mysterious flights of pigeons had been believed to herald war and calamity, and every face there grew graver and more anxious still as the rushing of their wings died away.

Oglethorpe, though not adapted for a military post, possessed some advantages of position which had more than once made it a place of refuge in Indian outbreaks. Without even waiting for the heat to decline, the wagons were got ready, the most valuable and portable of the household goods brought out and stowed in them, and the horses and oxen harnessed. Meshach shouted himself hoarse in bawling to the drivers to keep as close together as possible—he and his company acting as escort to the convoy. Not a living soul was left in the village. The old, the sick, women with babes at their breast, little children, sat among the household stuff, while the men trudged at the side of the wagons, or drove the cattle, which had been hastily collected from the nearest upland pastures. Althea never again read of the flight of the Israelites without thinking of that five miles' march through the sultry July afternoon, with the clatter of horse-hoofs, the uneasy rolling of the clumsy wagon-wheels, the constant flick of the tails of the fly-tormented cattle, the crying of some infant that refused to be pacified, and the patient-eyed dogs with their tongues hanging out of their mouths, as they panted along through the clouds of dust raised by so many feet and hoofs and wheels.

"You have a high courage, Miss Digby," said Noel to her, when late that night they all found time to take their coffee on the verandah. "You are not used, as we are, to alarms like these; 'tis the more to your credit that you can seem so little disturbed by them."

"Perhaps my hope that they would not attack us was stronger than my fear that they would," replied Althea. "Do not praise me too much, Mr. Branhholm. 'Tis my nature to like to be better than people think me, rather than have them think so unreasonable well of me that I must needs disappoint their expectations."

"You mean, then, that to please you I must do you an injustice?" cried Noel, provoked at having his compliment thus flung back in his face.

"'Twould undoubtedly displease me if you did."

"So that I cannot please you any way?"

Noel and Miss Digby were standing a little apart from the others, and he said this too low to be overheard—so low, indeed, that she too affected not to have heard, and stepping out into the light of the windows began to talk to Mrs. Branhholm about Boston, which was a frequent subject of conversation

between the two, Miss Digby having been so lately there. Althea had said that she did not like Boston; but she never allowed her dislike to appear on these occasions, and even endured with exemplary good-humour the many references to Jasper, which his mother never seemed to suspect might be uninteresting to her listener. "I've such confidence in Jasper," she would say. "Noel is all that a mother's partiality can desire; but, ah! my dear Miss Digby, it is very seldom that one sees an old head on young shoulders."

"And it is very odious when one does see it," thought Miss Digby; but of course she had far too much good-breeding to say so to Jasper's mother.

CHAPTER XIX.

"WOLF! WOLF!"

OGLETHORPE now resembled a town to which the inhabitants of the surrounding country have fled for refuge. Huts were hastily built; the rail-fences were strengthened; and the house itself became a kind of citadel. But the chief reliance was placed on the strict watch which was kept. Several fresh panics took place. A few days after the eventful Sunday, a hunting-party went out from Oglethorpe—for, considerable as were the resources of the plantation, they did not suffice for the needs of the new-comers. The hunters put up a flock of partridges, and four or five guns went off simultaneously. Instantly the alarm spread in the village near by that there was an attack by Indians. The men cut the harnesses of the plough-horses, leapt on their backs without waiting to saddle, and taking up their wives and children, made for Oglethorpe with all speed. Some forded the river, carrying their children on their backs, rather than lose an hour in going round the bend. The ladies, who had a habit in those days of looking out of the upper windows, saw the fugitives coming, and made sure of presently seeing the enemy in hot pursuit. But by the time the foremost reached the outskirts of the plantation, the hindmost had learned that the alarm was false.

Ever since the days of Æsop the cry of "Wolf! wolf!" has produced the same effect of terror at first and recklessness afterwards. Thus it came to pass that the hunting-parties went farther and farther afield, and that Noel, when rebuked by

Meshach Pike for over-rashness, replied that by this time the Shawnees must know the country was up, and must have fallen back. And so one day, Noel and Fred—who borrowed a hunting-suit of his friend for the occasion—with about a score of men, followed the tracks of a herd of deer so far that night overtook them on the side of a mountain overlooking a small lake, out of which ran a little stream. Most of the party thought they recognised it for a tributary of that river which fell into the Shenandoah, near to the spot where Noel had seen the dead body of Bald Eagle drifting in his canoe. This spot was many miles to the east; and if the hunters were correct in their reckoning, they were a good deal farther from Oglethorpe than was prudent, and in the wrong direction too. To mend the matter, there were some very fresh “Indian signs” on the trees a few hundred yards farther on.

A council was held, and it was determined to bivouac for the night, but not to light a fire. A ghastly discovery which was presently made did not tend to raise their spirits. Lieutenant Digby, in stripping the moss from a bank to make a bed, came on what he at first took to be some bits of bleached twigs, but which he saw the next instant were bones—bones of a human hand, with the arm attached. His horrified exclamation brought several others of the party to the spot, and a very few minutes’ search disinterred the whole skeleton. “His head’s on, so he warn’t killed in war, whoever he was,” said one of the men, contemplating these bleached relics of humanity, as they lay pitifully stretched out on their mossy couch—the hands fallen together, as if supplicating burial. In lifting the skeleton, the bones dropped asunder, and the skull rolled to the feet of the Lieutenant, who involuntarily recoiled.

The wild solitude, the gathering twilight, the knowledge that these woods were the lair of wolves, and had very lately been the resort of worse than wolves, and now the discovery of these bones—which must have lain in their forgotten and unhonoured grave for half a century—all this was enough to depress the boldest spirits. Lieutenant Digby found himself mechanically repeating the maxims of Meshach Pike;—“Never be surprised; keep close together; keep your arms handy.”

“But, good heavens!” thought the Lieutenant dolefully; “what’s the good of arms, when they can spring out of the very leaves of the trees? The look of the place is enough to daunt a man. A man must have room to fight in!”

Noel, to whom he communicated his uneasiness, agreed that it was rather ugly; but seemed to think the worst part of it was, that it would be unwise to kindle a fire, and that they had nothing for supper but some salt pork. It was also a serious question whether the wolves might not take advantage of them if they had no fire.

With these agreeable thoughts by way of a composing-draught, Fred lay down on his mossy bed, more than half expecting to be food for worms before the morning. He awoke out of an uneasy sleep, to see that it was clear starlight; and that Noel, wrapped in a cloak, and looking unnaturally tall, was slowly patrolling under the trees. He had dropped off again, when a slight sound roused him, and opening his eyes, he fancied he saw two prick ears and a shadowy flank appear from under the trees. At that instant, Noel turned in his walk, and the ears vanished. Fred felt for his musket—it was safe by his side. He was considering whether he ought to tell Noel he had seen a wolf, when sleep overcame him; indeed, in the morning, Noel was inclined to think the whole thing a dream.

The dawn rose red and misty with exhalations from the lake. One after another, the sleepy hunters sat up and rubbed their eyes. Suddenly, one of them seized his musket and fired, before any one could speak, but not before all eyes, instantly turned in the direction of his aim, saw a deer in a partial clearing of the mist which clung about the broken ground. The deer leapt high in the air, and fell. "You fool!" said Noel, under his breath. "Here have we lain shivering all night, with the wolves sniffing at our toes, for you to blaze away at the first deer you see!"

"Very sorry, Mr. Branhholm," said the culprit sheepishly—he was a mere youth, younger than Noel—"but we ain't got nuthin' for breakfast—an' 'sides, it's kind o' goin' home with yer tail between yer legs, ter hev ter say as you ain't shot a single hoof, nor claw—an' bin out more 'n twenty-four hours."

"Better go back with your tail between your legs, than go back with your scalp hanging on a pole to dry," retorted Noel angrily. "Well, now it's done, it's done," he continued; "so let's make the best of it, and then make tracks for Oglethorpe."

The most sheltered place was selected, and a small fire was made, over which some steaks cut from the deer were broiled, Noel all the time saying they ought to have left him where he

lay. "But we may as well fight on full stomachs," he said to Fred, when, having concealed the most conspicuous traces of their feast, they were at last on their way homeward.

When the lake was left behind, the forest closed in on them so completely that they could only ascertain the direction in which they were going by constantly observing on which side of the tree-trunks the moss grew thickest. The trees did not stand very close together, and the undergrowth was sparse, but they seldom could see more than thirty or forty yards ahead. They pushed on rapidly, and about noon came to a rocky place, where huge boulders overhung the bed of a dry stream. A clump of spruce, pines growing so close together that their boughs could not be distinguished, stood on the very top of this boulder. This was the Devil's Forge, and the party knew that by striking across the spurs of the mountain, they were now but three or four hours from Oglethorpe.

They had gone perhaps five miles (so far as it was possible to reckon distance, where the only landmarks were tree-boles and thorn-bushes), when the forest grew thinner, and they were able to see the crest of a mountain at no very great distance. Two of the party were a few yards in advance, but all were moving cautiously,—as they always did when approaching open ground,—when they heard a shot, and one of the two men in advance dropped, while the other ran back, crying,—“Injuns ! Injuns !”

There was a large beech-tree close by—the last large tree before a great open space, sloping presently rather abruptly to the river. There, down on the river's bank, was the Indian camp, and between thirty and forty Indians were scattering behind such covert as the place afforded.

“Back to back round the tree !” shouted Noel. “Don't waste a shot !”

As he spoke, a ball struck the tree, and Noel replied by bringing down the Indian who had fired it. As for Fred, who had never been under fire before, he gave himself up for lost, and already saw his bloody scalp hanging at the belt of one of these savages—who looked horribly like devils—but he resolved to sell his life dearly. “Mark each one down—for God's sake, don't fire wild !” shouted Noel, himself firing a second shot and again bringing down his man.

The next ten minutes were ever after to Fred a confusion of flashing matchlocks, diabolical painted faces, and more dia-

bolical war-whoops. But after the first surprise he began to recover his presence of mind, and—remembering how Meshach Pike had said a General was better than numbers—did his best to obey Noel's orders. There is no doubt that fighting is a pleasure which grows upon one. After Fred had had the satisfaction of seeing one sinewy paint-bedaubed redskin tumble headlong, convulsively clutching at the ground as he fell, his spirits somewhat revived. But loading was nervous work, and Fred would gladly have drawn his sword, and run in and laid about him, instead of fumbling with a cartridge when every instant was so precious. But, alas! his sword was at Oglethorpe, ten miles off, and he had nothing but the long hunting-knife which Noel had lent him.

Finding that several of their number had fallen dead, while the white men were comparatively uninjured, the Indians prepared for a rush *en masse*; but Noel was ready for them, and bidding only every alternate man fire, he received them with so well-directed a volley, that they retreated without waiting for the other half of it.

"Will you not charge them?" asked Fred, hastily reloading.

"No, no," said Noel; "better wait for their attack. They'll come on again."

All this time the man who had fallen at the first shot lay where he had rolled, a few yards down the slope. Wondering at the length of time which elapsed before the enemy returned to the charge, Noel saw that half-a-dozen of them had stolen round, and were beginning to drag off the wounded man.

"We must rescue him—he may not be dead!" he exclaimed. "Six of you go!" And instantly Fred, with four or five others, had sprung down the slope. There was a hand-to-hand fight round the body, which might have ended more disastrously than it did, had not the Indians been so eager for the wounded man's scalp that they struggled with each other in the effort to get at him, and two were killed before they could turn to defend themselves.

The remaining Indians, meanwhile, had renewed the attack under the tree, and the air was rent with their yells. Suddenly Fred found himself flung with such violence to the ground that his senses almost forsook him, although he retained a perception of his danger, as well as of a splitting pain in his head and an intolerable weight on his chest—the latter due to a dead Indian who lay above him. Presently, to his unutterable horror, he felt

a hand grasping his hair. He made a frantic effort to move, heard a fresh outburst of shouts and yells, and knew that Noel was standing over him. Then a curious indifference came over him, and then, for some time, he remembered nothing.

CHAPTER XX.

A SISTERLY EMBRACE.

WHEN Fred came out of his swoon, sick and dizzy, but otherwise none the worse, he found himself lying near the river, with Meshach Pike attentively watching him. Fred recognised many faces of Pike's company, and it slowly dawned on him that they had been reinforced. He remarked as much to Meshach, who he now perceived (not without a thrill of horror) had a couple of fresh scalps pinned to the skirts of his hunting-shirt. "Scalp for scalp—there's Scriptur' for that," said Meshach, with a grim twist of his dried-up lips, which was his nearest approach to a smile. "Leastways, 'twas an eye for an eye—but a scalp's as good every bit, an' comes to the same thing in the end. Reckon yer'll do now, Lef-tenant," he continued, after easing his mind by spitting. "'Twas that there ugly tree-root as swamped *you*. Reckon *they* Injuns won't trouble us much more. I tell yer, though, Lef-tenant, you had a pretty nigh squeak for that scalp o' yourn, an' I shan't never forgit comin' on yer, an' seein' Mr. Branhholm a-standin' over yer, layin' about with his gun-stock like mad, an' they yellin' devils prancin' around him."

It appeared that the long absence of the hunting-party was beginning to cause Mrs. Branhholm great anxiety, when the Colonel rode in, having hurried back from Williamsburg on hearing that war had actually broken out. Soon after his arrival, word was brought in by a man who had been out looking for some strayed cattle, that a party of Indians had been seen not far from the Devil's Forge. The Colonel had at once despatched Meshach and half a company of militiamen in that direction, fearing, as actually happened, that the returning hunters might fall in with the enemy. But for this timely succour, the hunting-party might have paid very dearly for their rashness in going so far in such small numbers. As it was, two men were killed, another died of his wounds before they

reached Oglethorpe, and several more were badly hurt, the worst being the man whom Fred had rescued, and who was that same indiscreet youth who shot the deer.

Of course the women received them as heroes ; but when the Colonel heard how it had all happened, he swore that Noel was not fit to be a captain, and that mere dare-devil rashness would never make him one. Thus he spoke in public, angry at the unnecessary danger that Noel had run, and at the anguish it had cost his wife ; but in private, when he had heard from Fred (who did not let Noel's generalship lose in the telling) how his son had borne himself, he so far relented as to vow that the lad was a gallant young rascal after all.

Noel had certainly no cause to complain of his reception. His mother hung weeping on his neck, Mary embraced him, and the haughty Althea entirely forgot her scornful dignity, and laughed and cried all at once. She ran up to her brother, and flung her arms round him. "Thank Noel, sister, that you see me alive," said Fred, as he returned her embrace. "But for him I was lost."

Althea lifted her tear-stained face from Fred's shoulder and looked at Noel. Then she deliberately went up to him, put her arms round his neck, and kissed him, saying,—“I have two brothers from to-day. Dear brother Noel——” And then she broke down and sobbed on Fred's neck.

It has often been remarked that the fulfilment of our wishes does not necessarily complete our happiness. That Althea should voluntarily bestow a kiss upon him was a piece of good fortune to which Noel had never aspired even in a lover's dreams—the utmost stretch of his imagination having never gone farther than to show him Althea, at some dim distant period, permitting a respectful salute. Yet now that she of her own accord had actually kissed him, he was so far from feeling elated that her kiss lay like lead on his heart. Great emotion sometimes clears the mental vision ; Noel knew that it was in very truth a sisterly kiss, and that none but sisterly thoughts were in Althea's heart as she gave it him. She was kind—ever after that day she was kind ; but her kindness more effectually discouraged him than all her former banter. It was a more impassable barrier, because it provoked no retaliation. He was almost glad that his time and thoughts were so fully occupied, and that the moments he could spend in her society were so few. He told himself that his youth was against

him ; and he looked forward with hope to the prospect of a real campaign in which he trusted to rub off this youthful bloom. If only no one came in in the meantime ! With some experience of war, and perhaps a scar or two, she could no longer despise him. And so, to the despair of his mother, he insisted on marching with Meshach Pike to join Colonel Andrew Lewis, who was ordered to the Great Kenhawa, there to form a junction with the other contingent, under Lord Dunmore himself. Fred (who had with some difficulty got his leave extended thus far) would fain have gone too, but was persuaded to remain with the small force left as a garrison at Oglethorpe.

The evening of the day on which Noel went—the crimson of the maples showed like fire, and the elms were yellow by that time—Mary and Althea wandered about the garden, long after the frosty autumn dews had fallen. They could hear the negroes singing in their quarters beyond the cane-plantation. Now that a great force was actually in the field, there was far less fear of desultory attack ; and a sense of comparative security had returned. Every now and then a mocking-bird sang from a hemlock-tree near them, but none of these sounds could much disturb the deep sense of stillness which wrapped the whole of the wide valley in rest.

As they slowly paced up and down, Mary said softly,—“I will lift up mine eyes to the hills.”

Althea looked up the dim slopes of those vast enclosing walls. “How small we seem !” she said. “I could fancy they were about to fall upon us ; and yet they are like protecting arms too—like the Everlasting Arms.” Then, as through the deep silence they heard Fred’s footsteps coming towards them from the house, she suddenly slipped her arm round Mary’s waist, and whispered in her ear,—“I have wished to tell you this long while, Mary, ’twas a true sister’s kiss I gave Noel that day, and I shall never give him any other.”

* * * * *

The battle of Point Pleasant (at which Noel distinguished himself), in breaking up the Indian confederacy, left men’s minds free to return to the great political struggle, which every one felt was on the eve of assuming a new aspect. Even the victory itself produced many bitter recriminations. Andrew Lewis was severely blamed for remaining in camp during the action, and it was said the day would have been lost but for Isaac Selby. Lord Dunmore’s strange order to

Lewis to march back at once and join him near the Shawnee towns on the Ohio—an order which luckily arrived the day after the battle—was considered highly suspicious. It was even hinted that the Governor had divided his force, and marched his own men seventy-five miles from those under Colonel Lewis, hoping by the destruction of the latter to weaken the militia of Virginia. Why else, it was asked, had he compelled Lewis (who wanted to fight again) to take the perilous march to Chillicothe?

Instead of the common danger allaying discord, no sooner was peace made with Logan and Cornstalk, than the smouldering fires burst out again fiercer than ever. It was a sign of the temper of the times, that a report that Boston was being bombarded by the British men-of-war was universally believed, and spread consternation through all the provinces.

Very soon after this, and while the negotiations with the Indians were still pending, Lieutenant Digby was ordered to return to his duty without delay. He set out with his sister on a frosty morning in October, availing himself of the opportunity of accompanying a tobacco-caravan which Colonel Branhholm was starting for Philadelphia. Mrs. Branhholm had declared that she could not part with Mary, and had adroitly used the recent alarm about Boston to represent to Mr. and Mrs. Fleming that, now the Indians were broken up, Oglethorpe was a great deal safer than Boston. The Lieutenant was obliged to console himself with the reflection that, at any rate, Mary would be out of that Yankee fellow's way.

CHAPTER XXI.

AN ORATION IN THE OLD SOUTH.

In Freedom we're born, and like sons of the brave,
We'll never surrender,
But swear to defend her,
And scorn to survive, if unable to save.

BOSTON ALMANAC, 1770.

It is the morning of the 6th of March, 1775, and the Old South is crowded to hear Dr. Joseph Warren's oration for the anniversary of Captain Preston's unlucky affair, now five years ago. The Governor and his officials have never heard the

last of this; so sure as the 5th of March comes round, the Whigs rake the whole thing up again—transparencies of the victims are exhibited in Mrs. Chapman's shop in King Street, and inflammatory orations are fired off in the Old South. This year the 5th falls on a Sunday, so they keep the day on Monday. Dr. Warren, who is a young physician, is one of the rebel leaders. He is a singularly amiable man, excessively beloved by all who know him, and has a chivalrous self-devotion befitting the leader of a forlorn hope, in proof of which he has offered to deliver the massacre oration this year—for the second time—although hints have been dropped that to do so may be as much as the orator's life is worth.

A great many of the British officers go to hear this oration—at which it is whispered something may happen. In fact, a young ensign, a friend of Lieutenant Digby, has agreed with some other choice young spirits (of whom Digby himself is one) to throw an egg at Dr. Warren at a suitable point in his discourse, by way of signal. For what may happen afterwards, they can settle with the rebels. There *may* be a riot, and in that riot Hancock, Adams, and Warren *may* be seized—a consummation devoutly to be wished! Behold, then, Ensign Perkins gingerly picking his way through the crowd, with the egg very much on his mind—so much so, indeed, that he does not take sufficient heed to his goings, and being jostled, trips and falls, putting out his knee, and breaking the egg. A broken egg, as we know, is past the help even of the King's horses, but Ensign Perkins is carried off to the hospital to be mended.

Digby does not know of this mishap, having been at the same moment swept into the church by a sudden rush of the crowd. He finds quite a throng of British uniforms in the aisle. In the pulpit (draped in black) are Adams, Hancock, and the Selectmen. It is the motto of that psalm-singing, bacon-curing rogue, Sam Adams (as Fred is in the habit of hearing him called), to "always put your enemy in the wrong." So, guessing that mischief is meant, what does he do but request the occupants of the front pews to vacate them, and politely invite the officers into them—by which means they will be in full view of the whole congregation. One of the first to respond to Adams's request is Jasper Fleming, who can scarce repress a smile at the contending emotions he sees painted on Digby's countenance, as he tries to take his seat with unconcern.

There are so many British officers present that some of them sit on the steps of the pulpit—one or two are even in it. It is a bright sunny day, and the Old South is full of a warm yellow glow.

It is getting late—people look at each other. What if Warren has been assassinated? Suddenly, there is a noise outside, and he appears at a window. It was impossible to penetrate the crowd at the door, so he sent for a ladder, and now comes in at the window behind the pulpit. There is a sudden silence in the great assembly as he begins.

At first he speaks of the early history of the country; the descendants of the Pilgrim Fathers hear him with pale determined faces—growing paler and more set as he goes on to speak of the violations of the Charter, of the deliberately-planned crippling of the Colonies by unjust restrictions, and of the insults of a military occupation.

That impassioned oration was still ringing in the ears of all who heard it, when Joseph Warren found a soldier's grave. As he proceeded—every word a trumpet-call to action—a Captain sitting on the pulpit-stairs held up his open hand with half-a-dozen pistol bullets lying on the palm. But Warren only dropped his handkerchief over them, and went on. Once there was an interruption. The 47th returning from parade passed under the Old South, and Colonel Nesbitt ordered the drums to beat.

Possibly owing to the fiasco of Ensign Perkins and his egg, the intended demonstration fell flat. There was a moment, though, when Digby looked round for Jasper,—not knowing why he did so,—and saw him, one hand laid on a pew-door, and bending slightly forward, watching him as though he read all his thoughts. That moment was when it was moved that an orator be appointed for next year (long before which time another kind of oratory will be the mode). At this a British officer cried, "Fie! fie!" They thought he said "Fire! fire!" and there might have been a riot then and there, but for the town-clerk, who ordered silence with his mallet. "There is no fire here," cried Adams, as soon as he could be heard, "but that of liberty which burns in your bosoms." And so the meeting crowded out, but as Fred was struggling towards the Milk Street door, he felt a hand on his shoulder, and turning, saw Jasper Fleming close behind him.

"You must get something harder than eggs next time, Mr.

Digby," whispered Jasper,—at which Fred was so taken aback that he uttered an inarticulate gasp, and, getting his sword between his legs, all but fell prone on the threshold of the Old South. Indeed, he would have done so, had not Jasper caught him under the arm, and restored him to his balance—a polite attention which still further infuriated the Lieutenant, who mentally vowed that if ever a chance arose of using anything harder, it should not be his fault if Fleming did not come in for some of it. Speechless with rage, he hurried out into the street, where a brother lieutenant presently informed him of what had befallen the unfortunate Perkins.

Fred gave his sister an account of all this (only omitting that inopportune stumble of his own) next time he was off duty. She was rather silent, and did not seem to respond to the sentiment, when Fred observed cheerfully that "of course we should shoot 'em all down at the first brush."

"This nonsense won't last long—they'll all take to their heels, as soon as ever we show our teeth," he continued. "As for Fleming, if I could once get hold of him, I'd soon tackle *him*—he's only a pettifogging lawyer. How the doose did he know about the egg? He pokes his long nose into everything! But I'll be even with him yet! If his brother warn't such a friend of ours, I should be devilishly inclined to demand satisfaction!"

CHAPTER XXII.

A LANTERN IN THE OLD NORTH.

Come, join hand in hand, brave Americans all,
And rouse your bold hearts at fair Liberty's call.

THE LIBERTY SONG.

It had been whispered for a long time that the Governor intended to seize the military stores at Concord and other places by a *coup de main*. Fred Digby's visions of glory grew more and more vivid every day, as every day it was agreed at mess that "something would be done soon." On the 18th of April, two members of the Committee of Safety, returning from a seditious meeting at Wetherby's Tavern, saw some British officers on horseback, outside Charlestown Neck. Suspecting that this meant mischief, they drove back to the tavern and

warned their friends,—especially sending a warning to Hancock and Samuel Adams, whom Governor Gage was known to consider quite as well worth seizing as the powder and shot itself.

On that same Tuesday evening, Lieutenant Digby happened to be crossing the Common with Lord Percy—whom he had known in England, and who was always very civil to him. Percy was returning to quarters from a conference with the Governor, and had just said to Fred that he might tell him in strict secrecy that a blow would be struck before very long, when they observed a group of men standing under some trees. It was a clear evening, with the moon in her last quarter, just rising.

“Let us hear what the fellows have got to say,” says Percy, and joins the group.

“The troops have marched, Mr. Fleming—I had it from one that saw ‘em go,” said a man in a frieze jacket at that moment.

“Waal, guess they’ll miss their aim,” said another voice.

“What aim?” asks little Percy, suddenly pushing nearer.

“Why, the cannon at Concord.”

Lord Percy grips Fred’s arm hard at this, and pulls him out of the crowd, back towards the town. “We must see the Governor instantly,” he whispers, when they are quite out of earshot.

There is a standing order that no one shall leave Boston after ten o’clock at night, and it is close on ten. The Governor sends instant orders to stop any one trying to leave; but he is a minute too late—Dr. Warren has sent *his* orders, and in obedience to them, Paul Revere has been rowed across to Charlestown, borrowed a horse of Deacon Larkin, and is off at full gallop towards Concord, while a lantern hung out from the steeple of the Old North lets the people know that the long-expected hour is come. By the time Gage’s orders have reached the sentinels at the ferry, Paul Revere is galloping out of Charlestown, and a second lantern in the Old North tells that the attack is to be made by the way of Charlestown Neck. Hancock and Adams are sleeping at the Rev. Jonas Clark’s in Lexington, and have retired early—as the family have asked not to be disturbed. But at midnight, the messenger (who was very nearly taken on the way, more than once) comes clattering up at full speed, and there is no more rest that night.

That lantern in the Old North is the red flag of war. Before sunset to-morrow, the whole country will be up, and twenty thousand men will be preparing to march on Boston. Thanks to Warren, the messengers were ready, and they find the minute-men as ready as their name.

By the time the soldiers are landed at Phipps's Farm, bells are tolling, and guns being fired, to call out the minute-men. There is little sleep in Boston that night.

Jasper Fleming had tried to get out of Boston, but was stopped. For once Fred Digby was more prompt than he, and was already in command of a picket at one of the ferries. It was a huge satisfaction to Fred to say,—"Very sorry, Mr. Fleming, but your friends must do without you this time."

One of the soldiers laughed at this. There had long been open enmity between sword and gown in Boston.

"I doubt not, sir, that they can do excellently well without me," says Jasper, and goes off, feeling an unphilosophical desire to break the Lieutenant's head.

"That pays him for the egg, eh, Perkins?" says Digby in narrating this passage to his friend.

Next morning, messages come that the rebels are making a stand; Colonel Smith and Major Pitcairn want reinforcements. Luckily, Governor Gage has already sent Lord Percy with sixteen companies of foot, a detachment of marines, and two cannon. Percy marched out a little before noon (to the tune of *Yankee Doodle*), and reached Lexington just as Smith and Pitcairn had fought their way back thither from Concord, along the hilly road winding through forests and thickets. They are saying in Boston that Pitcairn's men lay down on the ground with their tongues hanging out, as soon as they reached the square which Percy formed to receive them,—so parched and weary were they with all those hours of marching and fighting.

It is fifteen miles from Lexington to Boston—a long way to retreat, harassed by an enemy which seems to spring out of the very ditches and fences. The rebels hang on their rear—they pick off the officers, they take advantage of every tree, every wall, every ditch. Like a swarm of wasps, they buzz on each side of the march. There are never more than four hundred of them together at any time in one place; but there are more of them every hour, as the alarm spreads through the country.

It is sunset before they reach Charlestown Neck—footsore and exhausted, and with the loss of two hundred and seventy

men in killed, wounded, and prisoners—and are under the friendly shelter of the *Somerset's* guns.

Boston and Charlestown are built on two peninsulas, which approach each other on the south side of Charlestown and the north side of Boston. Between the two towns, the Charles River is less than a third of a mile broad, or about as wide as the Thames at Southwark Bridge. Each of these peninsulas is connected with the mainland by a very narrow neck. There has been great confusion in Charlestown all day—many went out when Dr. Warren rode through in the morning with the news of Lexington; and there are few left but women and children, when the Governor sends word that no one else is to go. They crowd the higher ground, and see the troops marching along the Boston road, fighting as they march. Every puff of white smoke, every flash, every dull report of a musket, may mean that some husband, or brother, or father has fallen dead on the dusty road, or behind some bush or wall. The watchers strain their eyes—they watch as people watch from some harbour-head to see the fisher-boats struggling for life in the raging sea. Althea Digby had persuaded Mrs. Maverick to go to the ferry, where they might get earlier news; but the news they heard there brought little cheer. The rebels were showing fight. . . . The whole country was up and the militia out. . . . Pitcairn was killed. . . . No, it was Lord Percy. . . . It was neither—only Pitcairn's horse was shot, and he made prisoner. . . . Nothing of the sort—but Dr. Warren was killed, or severely wounded. . . . If so, it's all up with the rebels. . . . It was a terrible blunder not to send more men. . . . Adams and Hancock were taken—the speaker's informant saw them with their arms bound. . . . There were troops enough to sweep the Provincial hedgers and ditchers into the Charles. . . . That was a cannon shot! Some of them went to — then! . . . There are two thousand King's men gone, counting Lord Percy's—we shall smash the rebels all to pieces. What can country bumpkins do against regulars!

Althea listened to such talk as this, till her knees refused to support her, and she sank down on a coil of rope, beside a shed.

"You must not attend to the chatter of these people, my dear—they know nothing about what is happening any more than we do," said Mrs. Maverick,—who felt it her duty, as Governor Hutchinson's cousin, to put on a bold face. "The

only sensible thing I have heard to-day was that gentleman's remark about country bumpkins."

At last they were coming! The red lines could be seen defiling on to Charlestown pier, where the boats were waiting to carry them over. There were some wounded, and all bore the marks of the day. Althea burst into tears of relief when she saw Fred, covered with dust, his face swollen and blood-stained, his uniform besmirched and torn, sitting in one of the boats, and waving his hat to her.

"Now, let us go home," she said, composing herself after the first moment,— "and pray that we may never know such another day as this."

As she said this, and rose to her feet—faint and giddy with watching, and exposure to the sun—she saw Jasper Fleming standing near her, intently observing the troops who had already begun to disembark. He turned at the instant, and saw her. A deep red flush of anger swept to the very roots of Althea's hair, and she said, by an involuntary impulse of indignation,—

"So this is the end, Mr. Fleming, of all the fine seditious speeches you have been making so long! How do you like the result?"

He looked at her with such a look of sorrow and fixed determination, that she felt a shock,—as though she had struck her will against a stronger will than her own. But he only said,—

"The result is not yet, Madam ;" and making her a low bow, turned again to watch the disembarkation.

"Poor young man! he will be sorry for it yet," said Mrs. Maverick that night. "I only hope he will not lead astray that handsome brother of his. I have fancied, Althea, that you could turn Mr. Noel Braxholm into a loyal subject if you chose to take the trouble."

The old lady made great play with her eyes and her curls as she said this, and it was easy to understand the drift of her remark.

"I should despise him if I could!" exclaimed Althea, in a sudden flash of scorn. "However much he may be in the wrong, I like him better so, than if he would sell his soul to please a woman!"

"Highly-tighty!" said the old lady, not quite sure how to take this outbreak. "I hope you do not use such expressions

in public, my dear. People who do not know you as well as I do, would think you sympathised with the rebels."

"I love my King and my country as well as anybody, but I hope I may do that, and despise a man who is false to his principles," said the young lady in rather a high key. "If Mr. Branhholm was as black a rebel as Sam Adams himself—or—or—as his own brother, he would never cease to be a gentleman."

"That's his Virginian blood," said Mrs. Maverick. "My mother was a Virginian—you can always see the strain. I am really sorry, though, for that poor young man. I fear he will end on the gallows. They say he is very clever—I know his uncle expected him to do great things as a lawyer. But of course, he has ruined all his prospects. 'Tis a great pity! I suppose he would be called a plain man, but there's a *je ne sais quaw* about him—of course he gets it from his mother—a lovely creature, and Noel is her living image."

CHAPTER XXIII.

"A RUSTIC ROUT WITH CALICO FROCKS AND FOWLING-PIECES."

Rudely forced to drink tea, Massachusetts in anger
Spills the tea on John Bull—John Bull falls on to hang her;
Massachusetts, enraged, calls her neighbours to aid,
And give Master John a severe bastinado.
Now, good men of the land! pray, who is in fault—
The one who begun, or resents the assault?

THE QUARREL WITH AMERICA FAIRLY STATED.

BLIND as the authorities are, they are not so blind as not to see the meaning of Lexington. It means that the rebels *will* fight, and that a grenadier's cap will *not* suffice to disperse them, as has been said and believed. They will fight—their courage grew hotter instead of colder as the day went on—and a few more such days will turn the bumpkins into soldiers.

With Lexington, the war is begun. Six or seven hundred militia instantly turn out to Boston Neck,—where for nine days Colonel Robinson is almost the only officer, all the other officers, and most of the men, having gone home to set their private affairs in order, in prospect of what is coming. So for nine nights and days Robinson never changes his clothes, or lies down to sleep, and has even to do his own patrolling.

But the news of Lexington is speeding like the fiery cross. "For God's sake," they write on the message, "send it on by night and by day." By Sunday, it is known in New York. New York is a somewhat half-hearted city, and Tories are as rife there as rebels are in Boston; but the people shut the Custom-house, unlade two sloops full of supplies for the regiments in Boston, secure the military stores, and arm themselves—in spite of Lord North's conciliatory Resolve, and Lord Dartmouth's despatch, which arrive next day. Two days afterwards, the news is at Philadelphia. In twenty days, it is known from Quebec to Savannah; and Captain Derby of Salem has already put to sea, to carry the news to England.

On Thursday morning, at Pomfret, old Israel Putnam, ploughing in the field with his men, hears a drum, and sees a horseman. He is a messenger proclaiming the news of Lexington. Like an old war-horse, Putnam smells the battle from afar. He unyokes the plough-horses, and posts off on one of them to rally the militia, without even waiting to change his leathern frock and apron and check shirt; and in this same gear he rides into Cambridge next morning at sunrise, having ridden a hundred miles in eighteen hours.

The ferries over the Merrimac are crowded by the New Hampshire men, under John Starke of Indian renown. He and Putnam look like two of Cromwell's Ironsides come to life again, to draw the sword of the Lord and of Gideon. As for Ethan Allen of Bennington, Colonel of the turbulent Green Mountain Boys of Vermont, he might be Gideon himself—he is a wild figure, who might have stepped bodily out of the Book of Judges; and, to make the comparison complete, he is at this very moment a proclaimed outlaw for his doings in the matter of the New Hampshire Grants.

On the 26th, Captain Benedict Arnold of New Haven (after a brisk passage-at-arms with the Rev. Dr. Peters at Hebron) passes through Hartford at the head of his company, and there falls in with Colonel Parsons, to whom he imparts his views about an attack on Canada.

Inside Boston, the Tories look at the Whigs, and the Whigs look at the Tories; but every one is afraid to be the first to move anything but his tongue. Tongues wag pretty freely. At a town meeting, a zealous partisan calls the popular leaders "venomous serpents," and "eggs of sedition;" "mustard-seed" which, grown into a fine tall tree, harbours all manner of unclean

birds. These, and many other pretty and forcible figures of speech, does Fred Digby applaud with all his heart, soul, and strength—leading the van of the applause indeed, and for once drowning the murmurs of the Whigs.

The Governor, expecting the town to rise, sends for the Selectmen, and bargains with them to use no violence on his part, if the people will use none on theirs. On the Sunday, this covenant is ratified in a town meeting. The inhabitants further engage to deposit their arms in Fanueil Hall, under the care of the Selectmen, and marked with the owners' names, so that they may be returned when these calamities shall be overpast.

Whoever wants to go away, may go, and take his worldly goods, and the Governor will lend his boats to ferry him over to Charlestown. He also condescends to write a letter to Dr. Warren, asking that those persons who wish to come into Boston may do so unmolested.

For many days after Lexington, the road to Roxbury is thronged with wagons, crammed with fugitives, who have to be fed as best may be by Congress—as many as five thousand persons being soon distributed among the villages.

Meanwhile, on the Friday, Dr. Church comes in on an errand of mercy, to fetch medicine and surgical appliances for the wounded on both sides. He has insisted on coming in—much to Warren's surprise, who thinks it almost as much as his neck is worth. But Dr. Church is evidently the better judge of Governor Gage's temper. On Sunday evening, he returns to his rebel friends safe and sound, having been, however, stopped on Boston Neck, and carried off to the Governor to be examined. This, at least, is his own account. Warren, who somehow or other has never liked Dr. Church, is surely satisfied now. Even Paul Revere, who has at times not felt sure of the Doctor, has dismissed his suspicions with shame, ever since last Wednesday morning, when Church showed him a bloody patch on his silk stocking, and told him it was the blood of a man killed close to him, as he was encouraging the militia. Surely, thinks Revere, the Doctor must be sound, if he can thus risk his life for the cause.

The Flemings, who were among the first to leave the town, soon have reason to congratulate themselves on having departed while passes were to be had for the asking. The exodus from Boston continuing, two hundred loyalists who

enrolled themselves as volunteers on the 19th of April, are angry that the rebels are thus allowed to escape, and say that their presence is the only guarantee against an assault on the town. As Gage does not reply to this representation, they threaten to lay down their arms and go themselves; whereupon the Governor throws obstacles in their way—prohibiting the carrying off of merchandise, then of provisions, then of medical stores. Then, even trunks and beds are to be examined by the guard; and at last, passes are refused altogether. The Governor especially tries to detain the women, in the hope that their presence may prevent his being attacked.

Charlestown is nearly deserted; only a few of its inhabitants go into it now and then to look after their effects, or to do an hour's digging in their gardens, or to mow their grass—a pathetic touch of peace amidst the fiery rumours which say that the town is to be burned, and that, on a given signal, fire-stages are to be sent down the river. Fred Digby is always on the look-out for this signal.

The Provincial Congress, sitting at Watertown, on the first Sunday after the battle, vote the raising of an army of thirty thousand men; and, in an address to the people of Great Britain, they say they will be free or die.

Very soon, there are twenty thousand men encamped between Roxbury and Cambridge—a line thirty miles long—with General Artemus Ward as a sort of Commander-in-Chief. Ward has seen war in Canada, under Abercrombie. His army is made up chiefly of substantial farmers and merchants—men who have a great deal to lose besides their lives. Then there is General Thomas, who fought in the war of '56. On occasion of one of the many false alarms of a sally, Thomas repeats the device of a famous European Commander—having but seven hundred men, the General marches them round and round Prospect Hill, which manœuvre being visible from Boston, produces a wholesome effect on the enemy. Both parties are always trying to secure the stock on the islands—provisions in Boston are likely to run short, although the King's ships command the harbour—and there are constant skirmishes both by land and water.

All this while Jasper Fleming is with his uncle and aunt at Salem, from which place Mr. Lawrence Fleming finds he can carry on his business more conveniently than in Boston, under present circumstances.

CHAPTER XXIV.

A GENTLEMAN FROM VIRGINIA.

The pillar of a people's hope.

IN the meantime, Captain Benedict Arnold—having received a colonel's commission from the Massachusetts Committee of Safety, authorising him to raise four hundred men and go and take Ticonderoga—sets out on the 3d of May, intending to pick up volunteers as he goes. But at Castleton he comes up with Ethan Allen and his Green Mountain Boys, bound on the same errand, and holding a Council-of-war. Allen has a commission from the Connecticut Committee—who have condoned the affair of the New Hampshire Grants. After some squabbling, Arnold, having no men with him, puts his own commission back into his pocket and volunteers; and that day week, very early on a fine summer's morning, Colonel Allen, with Arnold at his side and the Green Mountain Boys behind him, walks into Ticonderoga, past the gaping sentinels, and summons the garrison to surrender. "In whose name?" asks Captain Delaplace, running out undressed, with his breeches in his hand, to see what is the matter. "In the name of the Great JEHOVAH and the Continental Congress!" says this new Gideon, waving his sword about the Commandant's ears, who, seeing no help for it, yields up the fortress, and retires to finish his toilet. The same day, Allen's lieutenant, Seth Warner, surprises Crown Point; and the next, fifty men come in to join Colonel Arnold, bringing with them a schooner they have taken, and with these he takes St. John's. But the rival Colonels continue to squabble—it is Massachusetts against Connecticut, and is a specimen of that State jealousy on which Hutchinson and Oliver taught the ministry to count.

But if the Provinces are jealous of each other, there is a wonderful unanimity in their behaviour, as Lord Dunmore finds to his cost. On the night of the 20th of April, he removed the powder from the public magazine at Williamsburg to an armed sloop which lay in the James River. The secret leaked out next morning, and the Mayor and Corporation demanded the restitution of the powder as the property of the town, and also as necessary to the public safety—for there have for some

time past been apprehensions of a rising of the slaves. The Governor flew into a passion, and swore a terrible oath that if any insult were offered to himself or those who carried out his orders, he would declare freedom to the slaves, and lay Williamsburg in ashes. He holds out till he hears that Patrick Henry is marching on Williamsburg, to recover the powder by force of arms, and seize the treasury, and, then thinking better of it, sends to pay for the powder, and says that in what he did he had the best intentions. But the people distrust him; and Williamsburg growing uncomfortably hot, he goes aboard the King's ship *Fowey*, off Yorktown, and invites the House of Assembly to come to him there—which they decline to do.

At this critical juncture of affairs, Mr. Butler desires his family to go to New York, where the chief strength of the loyalists lies. He himself remains in Williamsburg—still striving to patch things up. Colonel Braxholm and he exchange very brief greetings, when they meet now and then in the streets of Williamsburg. Congress (reassembling in Carpenter's Hall on the 10th of May) still, for the most part, hopes for final reconciliation with the mother country; but all now know that they must fight first. And if they are to fight, they must have a General—at present the Provincials are commanded by anybody and everybody. When a skirmish is imminent, the first Colonel of militia who happens to be passing that way takes the command.

There are fighting men in plenty; but where is there a General? Every one knows that Mr. Hancock would like to be appointed; and his wealth and position, and great sacrifices in the cause, give him some claim. But his health is delicate, and he has never seen any active service. Moreover, there is a strong Southern party in Congress which cannot stomach a New England army commanded by a New England General. The Virginians have a General in their eye—a Southern General over a Northern army would make all fair. So when, one June morning, Mr. John Adams gets up and proposes "a gentleman from Virginia, now among us, and very well known to us all," every face is turned to where Colonel Washington of Mount Vernon is sitting, close by the door into the library—where he slips away, as soon as he perceives that he is the object of attention. Mr. Hancock's handsome countenance was observed to fall at the words "a gentleman from Virginia;" but when, a day or two afterwards, Mr. Johnson of Maryland formally

nominate Colonel Washington, he is unanimously elected Commander-in-Chief of the Continental forces.

General Washington is soon ready to start. He marches out of Philadelphia with a considerable following of volunteers—young Virginians, always ready to go where there is a chance of some fighting—and, to the scandal of the sober elders, a goodly number of young Quakers. One blast of the trumpet of war has blown peace-principles clean out of their heads. One of these, young Mifflin, is the General's aide-de-camp.

As soon as the news of Lexington reached Oglethorpe, Noel Branhholm—returned safe and victorious from his first campaign—announced his intention of volunteering. Either he or his father must go—this he said, when his mother turned pale; and having said it, he embraced her and Mary, told them he should come back a Major-General at the least, and went out to send a messenger for Meshach Pike, with whom he took counsel. He was offered the command of one of the companies of militia, and set off at its head, leaving Pike to follow.

"Bress you, Mis' Myra," said Uncle Memnon, the first time he saw the ladies after Noel's departure. "What could you 'spect? Tucks will be tucks, for all ole hen he hatch 'em."

Noel makes such haste, that he reaches Philadelphia just in time to form part of the General's escort. With Washington ride two of the new Major-Generals—Schuyler and Lee. Schuyler is a Dutchman of New York, an upright and honourable gentleman, staunch and kind-hearted, but a stiff martinet. Lee is an English soldier of fortune, who ought to have been a captain of Free Lances. He is a restless disappointed man—cynical, irascible, odd, and affecting to be odder than he is. Schuyler and he are old comrades, and fought together under Abercrombie in Canada, where Lee, then a high-handed young captain, requisitioned the Canadians as though he had conquered them—or had been a Prussian. He was wounded in Abercrombie's unfortunate affair at Ticonderoga, and kindly nursed by Schuyler's aunt, whose cattle had been taken and herself insulted. The good lady heaped coals of fire on his head to such an extent that he swore Mrs. Schuyler would have a place in heaven, though no other woman should be there.

Since then he has taken castles in Spain—fought the Turks—been aide-de-camp to Stanislaus Augustus—killed his man in a duel—got himself into trouble by writing political pamphlets—and had the honour of being thought dangerous

by the British ministry. He is a friend of Mr. Burke's; but man delights him not much, and woman less. Of human beings, he prefers the Mohawks. He made their acquaintance in Canada, and considers them models of good-breeding—and they have returned the compliment by bestowing on him the appropriate name of Boiling Water, and admitting him to smoke beside their council-fires. He also admires the Cossacks. But dogs and horses engage his best affections. His dogs sit at table beside him. As he says, one must have some object to embrace. One of these objects, Mr. Spada by name, is accommodated with a chair at table, and gives a paw to the ladies, when there are any present. Mr. Spada's manners are indeed superior to his master's, who is slovenly, coarse, and rude.

So the three Generals ride out of Philadelphia, anxiously discussing plans for the coming campaign; when, before they are twenty miles on their way, they meet an express from the army, with the news that there was a great battle at Boston last Saturday, and that Dr. Warren is killed.

Amidst the eager questions which beset the messenger, General Washington asks but one, "How did the militia behave?" And hearing the answer, he says,—“Then the liberties of the country are safe!”

CHAPTER XXV.

BUNKER'S HILL.

LIEUTENANT DIGBY's martial ardour was at last to find full vent. There is little glory to be won in shooting savages; and the excitement to be derived from marching along a dusty road, and being popped at from behind walls and hedges, is unsatisfying. But the Lieutenant was at last to be gratified with a regular engagement.

There were five thousand troops in Boston by this time, for the three Generals, Howe, Clinton, and Burgoyne, arrived on the 25th of May—when General Burgoyne expressed himself much disgusted that ten thousand peasants should keep five thousand King's troops shut up, but observed that he would soon find elbow-room.

The joyful occasion, for which Lieutenant Digby had so long been praying, did not, however, happen until the 17th of

June, early on the morning of which day he and everybody else in Boston were awakened by a heavy cannonade, which proved to come from the men-of-war lying in harbour. As day broke, the watch on board the *Lively* was astonished to see that entrenchments six feet high had been thrown up in the course of the brief summer night, on Breed's Hill.

Meanwhile, up on the hill, Jasper Fleming had been working all night by the low-lying gleams of the dark lanterns, while the stars shone overhead, and the sentinels cried, "All's well!" from the ships below. Towards dawn, Colonel Prescott, who commanded on the hill that night, sent him down with a patrol to the shore. As Jasper paced up and down here by the old ferry, he seemed to himself like a ghost revisiting the glimpses of the moon. Yonder, across that narrow water, lay Boston—home—the past—seen phantom-like in the star-lighted dimness of the summer night, and yet more unreal in the light of the lantern of memory. "All's well!" cried the sentinels, thinking that that night was as other nights, and that the dawn should come as other dawns; and then the morning broke, and they all knew that the time was come.

The work went on to the roar of the British batteries. As the morning wore, the smoke from the ships' guns hung above the gently-swelling hills, as clouds hang above mountain summits. Sometimes it would clear for a moment, and the untried Provincial soldiers on the heights would for one brief instant see all the familiar hills, clad in the fresh green of early midsummer. Down below lay the white houses and gardens of Charlestown—houses to which some of them had brought home their wives—gardens where their toddling children had plucked the flowers.

So they work on, wondering why they are not attacked—wondering still more why they are not reinforced. As the smoke now and then clears over Boston, they see the roofs and steeples crowded with people, anxiously looking towards the Charlestown peninsula. Old Putnam has gone for reinforcements; they say Ward is not sanguine; Jasper Fleming begins to wonder whether they are to be left to their fate. They have toiled all night, and all through the hot summer morning they have had no refreshments.

Prescott commands in the redoubt on Breed's Hill—elsewhere there is that same happy-go-lucky generalship of any one who happens to come first, which the Congress at Philadelphia

has just put an end to. Most of the men are new to active service, but there is no want of veteran Colonels and Majors, who turn up from time to time, or appear in all parts of the field at once—to the bewilderment of him who seeks to comprehend the battle. Prescott has seen much service in the French and Indian wars. Then there is Colonel Gridley, who was the engineer last night—he fired the shot into the Citadel which brought about the capitulation, at the First Siege of Louisburg; and old Israel Putnam, who fights in his shirt-sleeves, a hanger belted across his burly shoulders—only fit, sneers a British officer, “to lead a band of sicklemen.” But Abercrombie remembers Major Putnam at Ticonderoga in ’58—it was at his side that that beloved young Lord Howe fell, Sir William’s brother, for whose sake the Provincials can scarcely hate Sir William. Old Putnam, with his burly frame and scarred and weather-beaten countenance, is a tower of strength to the men on Breed’s Hill. They know that he dares lead where any dare follow. Not a man there but has heard how once at Pomfret he crawled into a she-wolf’s den, when all other means of getting at her had failed. He has been tied to a tree by Indians, while tomahawks were flung at him for sport, French officers aiding and abetting; and then, after a painful march, stripped and bound to a stake to be roasted alive, and only rescued at the last moment, and after the fire was lighted, by a Frenchman more generous than the rest.

Then there is Colonel Pomeroy, another veteran of those French Wars which were the school of arms for the Colonies. He borrowed a horse this morning; but, finding the fire rather warm on Charlestown Neck, would not risk another man’s beast, so sent him back, and walked the rest of the way.

Jasper Fleming, who knows something of artillery, is appointed to one of the field-pieces in the redoubt. He thinks, as he carefully gets his range, that he is stealing a march on Noel, who will envy him when he comes to hear of this day. “The pacific member of the family is first in the field, after all,” thinks Jasper, with a grim smile, his eyes wandering in the direction of the steeples of Boston. “’Tis the sole advantage I am ever like to take of the dear boy, so I had as well make the best of it.”

But if as yet there is no fighting, the British artillery kept up a constant roar, and private Asa Pollard falls dead. “Whas shall we do with him, sir?” asks a subaltern, to whom dead

men are still a thrilling novelty. "Bury him," says the Colonel. "What! without prayers, sir?" says the subaltern. And Chaplain M'Clintock begins to say prayers—till Prescott, perceiving that the sooner poor Asa is out of sight the better, orders the audience to disperse, and getting up on the parapet, calmly walks about there, giving orders, and even jesting, until he has so revived the drooping spirits of his men that they receive the cannon-balls with shouts. His commanding and martial figure is clad in the only suit of uniform on the field—a single-breasted blue coat, lapped up at the skirts, a tie-wig, and a three-cornered cocked hat. For some reason or other, he presently lays aside hat and wig, and is seen in his own brown hair, with the bald top of his head exposed to the broiling sun.

"Who is the person who appears to command?" asks Gage of Councillor Willard, perceiving this tall figure from Copp's Hill through his glass. "Will he fight?"

"He is my brother-in-law, sir, and an old soldier, and he will fight while he has a drop of blood left in his body," answers the Councillor.

By Putnam's order, the Provincials begin to fortify Bunker's Hill—which they ought to have done long before. The heat is intense, and no reinforcements come. Ward, at Cambridge, is afraid of weakening his camp too much. It is nigh noon. The British fire redoubles, and masses of scarlet uniform begin to blossom out on the Long Wharf and the North Battery. There will shortly be that fiddler to pay whereof Admiral Montague spoke eighteen months ago.

The red uniforms swarm into one barge after another, until Jasper Fleming counts twenty-eight of them, rowing in parallel lines for Moulton Point. The field-pieces come first, and as the sun strikes on their brazen mouths, they look fit to deliver the streams of red-hot oratory which they will shortly pour forth. The blue flag is hoisted, and they are all off—flashing oars, flashing armour and cannon, gleaming bayonets and muskets—blinding scarlet, and more blinding points of light—all flooded by the glorious sunshine, which shines on so many smiling hills and pleasant-smelling meadows, as though only the flower of the grass were to be cut down to-day.

And now at last reinforcements are coming to the Provincials. First, Jasper sees a single horseman dashing along the road from Cambridge—far-off, he recognises Dr. Warren. Dr.

Warren brings word that two thousand men will be here in twenty minutes ; and presently Colonel John Starke may be seen marching his New Hampshire men over the Neck—refusing to hurry them, in spite of the galling fire, for, as he says, one fresh man in action is worth ten that are fatigued.

At the foot of Bunker's Hill there is a fence, half of stone, and topped with two wooden rails. Captain Knowlton and his men have made another parallel line behind it, and filled the space with the new-mown hay which lay there, and here Starke takes his stand too.

Meanwhile, the twenty-eight barges have discharged their living cargoes. The barges presently put back ; and the British soldiers sit down in the long grass, and can be seen eating and drinking at their ease, with grog by the bucketful. Sir William Howe is waiting for more men, but also for cannon-balls which will *fit*. War is full of mistakes ; he wins who makes the fewest. Old General Cleveland, who is always dangling at the apron-strings of Schoolmaster Lovell's pretty daughter, gave her young brother an appointment in the Ordnance, and that young gentleman has sent twelve-pounder balls to load six-pounder guns with. So the hungry and thirsty rebels enjoy this spectacle of their enemies at dinner, while Sir William Howe swears at old dotards and young fools, and has time to observe that the redoubt is stronger than he thought it at first.

"Thank God ! we ain't got Indians to fight this time ! A parcel of slippery savages that 'tis a thankless task to engage !" exclaims Lieutenant Digby to Ensign Perkins, as they leap ashore with the second detachment—and quite unconscious of any incongruity in thanking his Maker for the opportunity of killing his fellow-subjects. Ever since that little affair at the Devil's Forge, the Lieutenant has been regarded as an authority on Indians ; Ensign Perkins in particular looks up to him with implicit belief as to a veteran campaigner.

"You've been under fire before, Digby," he says, as they hurry into position, while the barges put back for more troops. "They say the first time ain't like any other. I s'pose, though, they'll run after the first round."

It may as well be confessed that the poor little Ensign, who is only a boy, hopes most devoutly that they will,—the bravest men have owned to feeling awkward for the first five minutes or so that they ever had bullets about their ears,—and the Ensign would be glad if his first dose of powder and shot were

a mild one. He thinks it might be as well to say his prayers, but the only petition which occurs to him is—"From battle and murder, and from sudden death, good Lord, deliver us." The images suggested by this clause of the Litany are not cheerful; but if the Ensign is afraid of being killed, he is still more afraid of running away, and as soon as the fighting really begins, he feels better, and acquits himself with credit.

As the British lines advance up the hill, Old Put, as his men affectionately call him, cries,—“Fire low! aim at the waist-bands! Wait till you can see the whites of their eyes!” And he is so well obeyed that the enemy falls back, and the Generals send for fresh reinforcements, before they charge the battery a second time. Howe leads the right wing against the rail-fence, but that reserved fire makes murderous havoc. There is a lull—the sharp rattle of musketry ceases for a while, and only the deep bass from the ships keeps the concert going.

Jasper, still at his gun, asks himself if they are to win an easier victory than he had ever imagined possible? More Provincial reinforcements are coming—they can be seen beyond the Neck—Gerrish's men. Why do they not cross? There is Old Put frantically urging them on, but they do not stir! Alas! Gerrish, once a tolerable officer, has grown too fat to spur his men to the fray. And Major Gridley shows the white feather. He talks of covering the retreat. In vain does Colonel Frye try to goad him, with the reminder that that day thirty years his father fired that shot at Louisburg. Alas, for parental partiality! brave old Colonel Gridley should have given the artillery to young Benjamin Thompson. None of them will come on, though Old Put swears freely at them (for which he afterwards makes a very moderately penitent apology in Pomfret meeting-house).

Despite these terrible *contretemps*, the second attack is received with a still hotter fire than the first. Two of Howe's aides are shot down at his side, and he is three times left alone. He is much galled, too, by the firing from the windows of the deserted houses in Charlestown. The carnage is terrible. Burgoyne, looking on from Brattle church-steeple, thinks he has never seen so hot an engagement. But Howe will not condescend to a flank movement, and still declares that he will take the bull by the horns.

At this point in the conflict, Gage sends a party of marines from the *Somerset* to set fire to Charlestown. The wooden

houses blaze quickly. The steeple of the meeting-house is soon wrapped in a garment of flames that laps in the wind, which, carrying off the dense black smoke, from time to time shows the hills and fields—like a glimpse of Paradise seen out of the mouth of hell—and the steeples and roofs of Boston alive with spectators. Never was battle fought under so many eyes. When Howe orders a third attack, his officers say it is downright butchery—but Lieutenant Digby, who is the only unwounded officer of his regiment, got near enough to the redoubt last time to hear some indiscreet young rebels cry out that their powder was all gone. This welcome intelligence reaches Sir William's ear at the moment that General Clinton comes up as a volunteer, with two regiments which he found in confusion on the shore.

Prescott, in the redoubt, sees that all is lost, and begs Warren to save himself, but he will not. Starke and Knowlton are making a gallant fight of it at the rail-fence—but there is no kind of order by this time. "Let me go and bring up the reinforcements!" cries Jasper Fleming, hastily tearing off his cravat to make a sling—a musket-ball has just broken his collar-bone, and his right arm hangs helpless at his side. But it is too late. The want of order and discipline tells fatally now. After all, these raw levies must learn war on the very battle-field itself. This time the enemy are taking the redoubt in flank; they, too, reserve their fire, and advance on three sides at once. The Provincials are come to their last round. "Don't waste a kernel of it!" cries Prescott, as he places the few that have bayonets at the most likely points of attack. The Provincials fire their last volley; the enemy waver, but do not return it, and come on. And then there is a hand-to-hand fight. Fred Digby, clambering over, is flung down—as he falls, he sees Jasper, his sword in his left hand, wildly endeavouring to fight his way to Warren, around whom the balls are falling like hail. "Confound him! I didn't think he'd fight like that!" thinks Fred, as he scrambles up, with his mouth and eyes full of dust, and leaps into the redoubt—but is so swept along with the furious current, that he sees little but the clouds of dust and smoke which envelop friend and foe. Only two figures impress themselves upon his vision—Pomeroy, parrying the bayonets of the victorious grenadiers with his shattered gun-stock, and Prescott, who seems to bear a charmed life—both slowly fighting their way back; but friend and foe are almost

indistinguishable now in the *mêlée* and the smoke and dust. Just then he hears a cry near him, and sees two men of his own regiment running to support Abercrombie, who has just fallen.

"If you take Major Putnam alive, don't hang him, for he's a brave man," says the dying General, remembering his old comrade of Ticonderoga, as Fred and the others carry him off—passing poor Major Pitcairn, mortally wounded, just as he entered the entrenchment.

Major Small, too, whose life stout old Israel Putnam has saved this day, calls out, as he lies wounded on the ground, to spare Warren—but it is too late. Before he can reach him, Jasper sees his beloved friend stagger and fall, and at the same instant feels a sharp pang in his side, and all grows dark and silent.

It is five o'clock, and Lieutenant Digby's first battle is fought and won.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE SERGEANT SUSPECTS A PLOT.

"'Tis their duty, all the learned think,
T'espouse that cause by which they eat and drink."

It was some days since General Washington had drawn his sword under that historic elm at Cambridge, but Noel Branhholm had been unable to obtain any certain news of his brother. He had been seen to fall; but as his body had not been found, Noel refused to give up hope.

He was on picket-duty one night, when one of the British sentinels made a signal to him. Intercourse occasionally took place between the outposts, but greater vigilance had lately made this very difficult. Moreover, some Stockbridge Indians had come into the Provincial army, and had shot a careless British sentinel or two. On this occasion, the sentinel evidently did not dare to trust himself far out of his own lines. He cautiously threw a stone, round which Noel found a letter tied. He read it by the first pale sickly light of dawn. It was, as he had instantly hoped, from Jasper, but was written with such indifferent ink, the hand so feeble and indistinct that he had some trouble in making it out.

"DEAR BROTHER," he read,— "I am lying in Boston Jail, and must soon die there, unless you can get me exchang'd. I've got the

Feaver, and my wounds won't heal. For God's sake try and get me exchange'd as soon as there's any chance of such a thing. Your loving bro.,
J. FLEMING."

This letter (which was dated several days back), although a relief to Noel's worst fears, yet caused him the utmost anxiety. General Gage had refused to allow the rights of belligerents to the Provincials, and his prisoners were treated rather as sick felons than as wounded soldiers. Noel knew that General Washington was about to address a letter of remonstrance on this matter to his old brother-in-arms. He hurried off to headquarters as soon as he was relieved, and before noon had made interest to be appointed to carry the letter under a flag of truce. Once in Boston, he trusted to find some way of communicating with Lieutenant Digby, who surely could and would do something to alleviate his brother's condition. He was going away towards his own quarters for a little rest, when he felt a hand on his shoulder, and a clear ringing voice (which instantly recalled to his memory the long wide street of Providence) said; "Are you ready to redeem your word, Mr. Branhholm? Will you come with me to Quebec?"

Noel turned, and saw a powerful figure, rather under the middle height, and in military attire. As he looked in the dark sunburnt countenance, he said, taking the hand held out to him,—“I know your face, sir, and your voice perfectly——”

“But you have forgot my name? Well, never mind that, if you have not forgot the promise you gave me at Providence.”

“Captain Benedict Arnold!” exclaimed Noel. “I beg a thousand pardons, sir! I am much troubled with a private anxiety, or I had known you instantly. I’ve heard, sir, of your and Colonel Allen’s exploits, and was only sorry I was not there.”

“You can be in a bigger thing than the taking of twopenny forts, if you will,” said Arnold eagerly. “I have been much ill used—but of that no matter now. I have, as perhaps you know, a Colonel’s commission from Massachusetts, which therefore stinks in the noses of the Connecticut Colonels.” He slapped his coat-skirt as he spoke. “However, General Washington will respect my commission. Ethan Allen is a wild mountaineer, fit enough to lead his own wild people, but he understands nothing of the art of war, and will, I expect, run his head into a rat-trap before he is done. I have been shot at, sir—shot at by those lawless

bandits, the Green Mountain Boys! Allen and his men know not what discipline is; they are a mere rabble rout, all masters and no men! But if you are still in the mind you was in at Providence, come with me, and hear my plan."

"Colonel Arnold, there is no one under whom I would more gladly serve,"—said Noel, all his former impressions reviving as to this man's capacity for leadership. "Command me. I trust I may say I will not run away till you do—though I have a shrewd fancy that running away is the only thing you will ever be too late in doing."

"Nay, nay,"—said Arnold laughing, "I trust I can run away on occasion. I did so, indeed, t'other day from Dr. Peters. He threatened to blow my brains out, if I forced his stronghold, and as I perceived he was in earnest, I thought it a pity to spill my brains on so small an occasion, and so you see me here to-day. But come and hear my plans for a campaign against Quebec."

Early next morning, Noel Branhholm rode to Charlestown with a flag of truce in his hand, and the General's letter in his pocket. He had also written a very few words to Frederick Digby, which he trusted to get to him somehow or other; he was still contriving how this was to be done, when the boat came off to fetch him.

As Noel once more stood in Boston, a bewildering doubt as to the reality of the scene around him would intrude, and elbow out his half-formed stratagems. Had he really once known this town familiarly, and come and gone in its streets at his pleasure? Had only eighteen months passed since the *Fair American* took a pilot aboard one gloomy December afternoon? And did Althea Digby still dwell here? He tried to make her image take its place among the living people he saw—idlers, come to watch the flag, and pick up any crumbs of news—but he could not. He thought that, even if she herself came in at the guard-house door, she would still seem as a figure in a dream, and not half so real as his memory of her.

But if he felt that Althea had been so far removed out of his life as to seem beyond the reach even of his thoughts, Jasper was a terribly living presence—wounded and sick, perhaps dying. At this very moment, he might be turning uneasily on a pallet-bed in a miserable cell, with none to give him so much as a drink of water. Noel's travels had taught him to think well of the English character on the whole; he did not

believe the stories of inhuman treatment of prisoners which were current on both sides, and believed by each side of the other. But he knew the extreme rancour and hatred felt by the loyalists for the "rebels," and he was not at all sure that they would take extraordinary care lest a sick rebel should die. The thought that Jasper should lack kind hands to tend him was torture to him. He remembered how, in some childish malady, he had once awakened—hot, thirsty, and frightened, to find the night-lamp gone out, and the room all dark—how he had cried out, and how Jasper had come in from the next room, lighted a candle, brought him something to drink, and stayed with him until he fell asleep again. And now Jasper lay in the common jail—nursed probably, if nursed at all, by one of those British soldiers who had for years made it their pastime to insult the townspeople, and who were now enraged at the unexpected resistance they had met with.

With his heart swollen with such thoughts, Noel was suddenly recalled to what was actually going on around him, by perceiving that the Sergeant on guard was looking in at the door, and that now was his opportunity to speak. "Look here, my man," said he, holding out the letter—which he had taken the precaution not to seal—"if you'll give this letter to Lieutenant Frederick Digby of the 29th Foot, I'll make it worth your while. There's no treason in it—'tis on a private matter—you are welcome to read it, if you choose."

He thrust the letter into the Sergeant's hand as he spoke. The Sergeant's countenance (to which exposure to tropical suns and a gunpowder explosion had imparted a surprising variety of tint) assumed a puzzled expression. He took the letter, however—it was weighted with a couple of Spanish dollars—and opening it, turned it up and down, and round and round, in his hairy fingers, as though it had been a sample of cloth or leather. The Sergeant's eyes—which in form and colour resembled boiled gooseberries—had apparently at one time or other quarrelled so violently that they had mutually turned their backs on each other for ever. It was therefore physically impossible for him to examine the letter with both eyes at once—which may have been one reason why he was so long in arriving at a decision upon it.

"I can read print—mostly," he observed, after a careful inspection of every square inch, blank as well as written on, of the paper he held. "But you can't never tell where a word begins an' ends, in runnin' hand."

He held the paper out at arm's length as he spoke, and thoughtfully scratched his head, while he gazed intently on the mysterious characters with his right eye—the left vacantly roaming at large the while.

"It is only to entreat Lieutenant Digby of the 29th Foot to visit my brother, who is lying sick—I fear dying," said Noel—to whom it was agony to utter the word, even in order to work on this man's feelings. "He is a prisoner, and very sick," he continued. "I am a friend of Lieutenant Digby's. I knew him in England, and I once had the good fortune to save his life. He would, I'm sure, do something for my brother, if he did but know of his condition. You may show the letter to your Colonel—to any one you choose—if you will only get it to the hands of Lieutenant Digby." Noel said this in a hurried voice, trembling with eagerness and anxiety. The precious moments were passing; some one might come in. He pressed a guinea into the hand which still held the dollars—he had been afraid of arousing suspicion by giving too large a bribe at first.

"He's Captain now,"—said the Sergeant slowly, and with apparent unconsciousness conveying his left hand to his pocket, and turning on his left eye. "He's a smart young officer; he ought to be in a hoss-rigiment—he ain't cut out for a fut-soldier—yer see, he ain't used to it, arter bein' in the Dragoons—and as I allus say, 'ow the devil can a hossy man fight a-fut?"

"Well, will you get it to him? Will you give it to him?" said Noel; "or will you bring me to speech of some one that will?"

"Well, I *might* do that,"—said the Sergeant slowly, scratching his head to assist deliberation. "I *might* do that. *Givin'* a letter from a rebel to a King's officer's one thing—you never know where it might end; but *gettin'* it to him—look-ee here, Mr. Messenger, I don't know who you may be——"

"I am Noel Branhholm of Virginia," said Noel. "Everybody knows my father's name."

"I don't go for to say as they don't," said the Sergeant, still gazing abstractedly on the letter, and still scratching his head. "I don't say as they don't; but now, what might your father be?"

"He is a gentleman," said Noel haughtily.

"Ah! they say they are in Virginia," said the Sergeant musingly; then, suddenly fixing his parboiled right eye on Noel, he asked,—“But now, what might he be as to pollytix?"

"He is what you call a rebel, and we call a patriot," said Noel, who felt his hopes growing fainter every moment.

The Sergeant's optical peculiarity was here of signal advantage to him, enabling him to detail off one eye to observe any change which might take place in the paper—as for example, the becoming visible of any words written with secret ink—while with the other he watched the effect of his questions on Noel. During this process, he screwed his mouth awry, until his countenance became positively appalling. At last, he put his head on one side, and allowed the main body of his gaze to fall back on the letter, while he murmured, "Er——m."

"I swear on my honour as a gentleman that the letter is only to beg Lieutenant—Captain Digby, to go and see my brother, and carry him some succour,"—said Noel, with an earnestness which would have convinced any but a British sergeant.

"That's all mighty well," said the Sergeant doubtfully. "That is, the *beginnin'* don't seem to have no great harm in it; but it's the *end* as I look at. Now there *mayn't* be any secret writing in this here letter," here he brought his left forefinger down on the paper in question—"but then again, there *may*. Now, if there *was*, Lod A'mighty only could tell what 'ud be the end of it. That's how *I* look at it, Mr. Powel Ransom, or whatever your name may be."

"It is impossible that any ill-consequences can ever result to you from a mere act of humanity," urged Noel.

"That's all well enough; but now look you," said the Sergeant, throwing his legs a little apart, so as to take up a firmer argumentative stand; "this is where it is. 'Ere's His Majesty, King George the Third" (the Sergeant made a military salute) "on the one side, as represented by his orificers here in Boston, and by me in this here guard-'us; and 'ere's a number of evil-disposed persons, as have took up arms against His Majesty's lawful authority—contrairy, as you may say, to the laws of nature—on the t'other side. A certain number o' these evil-disposed persons is now layin' in jail in this town—havin' been, as I said afore, took pris'ners in the exercise o' their unlawful rebellion against their undoubted natural sufferin'. Now, the case standin' in this situation, 'ere comes a person as *owns* as he's one of them evil-disposed persons, and as comes from 'em with what he calls a flag—not as rebels *can* have flags, not bein' belly-gerents in law—and arsts me—civil enough, I don't deny—to carry a letter to another o' these evil-disposed persons, as has been took in

open rebellion, and now lays in the town-jail—as he *ought* to lay. Now, such bein' the case as it now stands, if *you* don't see as this 'ere letter might be a conspiracy to take the town by strattagem, *I* do."

The Sergeant alternately scratched his head and re-examined the letter, often glancing uneasily at Noel, whose distress evidently affected him.

"I'll tell you what I'll do," he said presently. "If you like to leave the letter here on the table, when the orficer o' the guard comes round, I'll contrive for him to *find* it."

With this Noel was obliged to be content; but when, after some hours of waiting, an answer was at last brought him by the Governor's Secretary, Noel took courage on seeing that he was a very young man, and showing him the letter (much the worse in appearance for the thumbing it had received), implored him to take it to Captain Digby.

"I will take it, but I fear it will be of no use," said the young fellow. But he looked in the same evening at the *British Coffee House*, and, finding Digby there, gave him the letter.

"An uncommon good-looking young fellow gave it me," he said. "He came in this morning under a flag, with a letter about the prisoners. I really couldn't refuse him when he begged me with tears in his eyes to save his brother."

The letter which had seemed so dangerous to the wary Sergeant, contained only these words:—

"DEAR LIEUT. DIGBY—My brother Jasper was wounded and made prisoner on the 17th of June, and now lies in Boston jail. He has caught the Jail fever, his wounds won't heal, and if he's not removed he will die there. For God's sake, and if ever you thought I did you a service, don't let him perish. He might recover if he could be took away, but he must die if he's left to rot in prison much longer. You said at Oglethorpe you owed me your life, but I should never have remember'd it if you was not now able to save my brother's. Your sincere but most unhappy friend,
NOEL BRANXHOLM."

"Confound it!" thought Fred; "it's that insufferable fellow Fleming. I detested him from the first moment I saw him. I'm sure I wish for my part he lay there till he did rot—he richly deserves it! However, as Branhholm saved my life, of course I must do something. I'd better go and see him, I suppose. 'Tis a cursed plague to have to put oneself out of the way for a fellow one detests! And 'twill be no use—they'll never show any indulgence to such a red-hot rebel as Fleming; the fellow's as great a firebrand as that bacon-curing rogue, Sam Adams."

It happened that the new-made Captain's temper was greatly irritated at the moment by the recent discovery in the hands of two of his men of the following handbill, which they professed to have picked up that moment, blown on the wind :—

PROSPECT HILL.

- I. Seven dollars a month.
- II. Fresh Provisions, & in Plenty.
- III. Health.
- IV. Freedom, Ease, Affluence, & a Good Farm.

BUNKER'S HILL.

- I. Three Pence a day.
- II. Rotten Salt Pork.
- III. The Scurvy.
- IV. Slavery, Beggary, and Want.

This precious production had, Fred was convinced, come through the sentries. He tore it up—but afterwards put the crumpled fragments in his pocket, to show his Colonel. The allusion to the salt pork was enough to try the sweetest temper, and Fred's was already much tried by the intolerable heat of the beleaguered town.

CHAPTER XXVII.

CAPTAIN DIGBY PERFORMS AN UNPLEASANT DUTY.

I do begin, I know not why, to hate him
Less than I did.

THE DUKE OF MILAN.

IN, therefore, as ill a humour as was possible to an exceedingly sanguine temperament, Captain Digby went to the jail next day, and had very little difficulty in getting admitted to see Mr. Fleming. He found that red-hot rebel and firebrand lying on a miserable bed in a comfortless cell. A sunbeam which had got in at the barred window was the only cheerful thing in the room—and even that looked like a sunbeam in irons, crossed as it was by the shadows of the bars.

The Captain's eyes were a little dazzled from coming through the blazing July sun, but at the very first sight of Jasper, his sentiments underwent a surprising change. Not being much accustomed to sickness and the ravages it can make, his first thought was that Jasper was actually dying, so wan and ghastly was the face he saw, lying with closed eyes on a soiled and wretched pillow. But at the noise of his entrance the eyes unclosed—large and unnaturally bright—they haunted Fred for days afterwards—and a red spot came

out on one of Jasper's hollow cheeks. Fred advanced to the bedside, as the warder shut the door.

"This is kind," said the sick man feebly. "Sit down."

Fred mechanically sat down on a wooden stool beside the bed. He could not speak for a choking in his throat.

"This is very kind," repeated Jasper, laying his wasted and burning hand on Fred's.

"Good God! I never thought you'd be like this," exclaimed Fred, positively blubbering. "But we'll have you out! I'll move heaven and earth to have you out! I'll go to Percy—he'll help me!"

Emotion is infectious, and Jasper was very weak. "You unman me by so much sympathy," he said, his own eyes filling. "I'm not used to it."

"Don't smile like that as if you was just going to die—don't, for heaven's sake, my dear fellow," cried Digby, pressing his hand. "I can't bear to see you! I never saw anybody look so bad in my life, except our old coachman after the bull had gored him—and he was seventy," he added hastily, lest the parallel might unduly depress the invalid.

"Wounds are nasty things," said Jasper apologetically. "And pernaps, as I'm not a soldier by profession, I take them harder."

"It ain't your wounds, so much as this cursed hole that's killing you," said the Captain, adding in a parenthesis,—“By the bye, what are your wounds?”

"A shot in the side and a broken collar-bone," said Jasper. "I believe one or two of my ribs were broken too, but the fever's the worst."

"We'll have you out, by gad! we'll have you out!" cried Digby—as hotly as though the patient did not richly deserve all he had got. Somehow or other, this fact had lost much of its importance ever since he had seen Jasper.

"Is Dr. Joseph Warren killed, or did I only dream I saw him fall?" asked Jasper presently—but not as though he had much hope that it was a dream.

"He is killed," replied the young Captain bluntly—and added with a rough attempt at sympathy,—“It's astonishing how fond everybody was of him; and Sir William, when he heard it, wouldn't believe at first you'd have let him risk himself. He said it made up for our loss, for Dr. Warren was as good as five hundred men to the reb—I mean, the Pro-

vincials. That was an awful Sunday," continued Fred, as Jasper did not speak. "Every coach and cart in Boston was levied to carry the dead and wounded. They say there was more killed than at Minden, or the taking of Quebec. I saw three captains dead, and one dying, all in a hackney-coach together."

So zealously did Fred go to work, that by the evening of the next day Jasper was removed to Mrs. Maverick's own house—Fred having made so moving a representation of his sufferings that that good lady declared she could not rest in her bed, unless she did all she could for the poor misguided young man. After all, she observed, he was the son of an old friend, and that old friend, a Virginian of most unimpeachable pedigree.

Althea's conduct on the occasion was not all that it might have been. She said she did not see the necessity for their nursing Mr. Fleming themselves—just as though he had been wounded in the performance of his duty. He was a rebel, continued the young lady doggedly, with a hard red flush on her cheeks and a dull light in her eyes; of course if he was really as ill as Fred thought, common humanity demanded that some indulgence should be shown him; but to bring him here and nurse him as if he was one's own brother, seemed for all the world as though one approved of his conduct—and for her part, she thought Mr. Fleming might be very well taken care of elsewhere.

"In his uncle's empty house, for instance—which has seemed to interest you very much since there's been nobody in it," said Mrs. Maverick, rather indignantly. Althea happened to be standing in the window as she spoke. "I protest, child, I'm shocked at your unfeeling spirit! I could not have supposed that a Christian young gentlewoman could have shown so much inhumanity."

"When you see him, sister, you'll feel sorry for him—'pon my soul, you will!" cried Fred, anxious to avert a storm.

"I am sorry already—for him and all other wrong-doers," said Althea loftily. "I only don't see why I am to shake up his bolus for him."

"'Pon my soul, sister, I don't know what's got you!" said Fred—for once forgetting his awe of his sister, in indignation at what seemed to him this unwomanly harshness. "I felt just as you do before I saw him. But you'll excuse my saying I don't

think this harshness becomes you—or any woman. A little softness, even to an offender, never shows amiss in a woman, and I don't care if I tell you so to your face!"

If the Captain had stood on his head before her, Althea could hardly have been more astounded than at this open revolt. But if he thought to browbeat her, he was mistaken. "I do not doubt you think a woman should be kind to a man's faults," she said—with a look which made Fred feel three sizes smaller. "There is plenty of scope for that sort of charity nearer home, without fetching in all the sick and wounded rebels to exercise it upon. And as for inhumanity—since Mr. Fleming is to be brought hither, I shall, of course, help Cousin Maverick to do what is necessary. I trust I should not be inhumane to a much worse man than I hope he is."

"How you do detest him, to be sure, sister! I remember I didn't like him myself at first," said Fred, hoping to appease her. "I'm sure I don't know why, though—he seems harmless enough now. Well, I shall fetch him here about sundown—and I hope, for God's sake, Althea, you'll receive him with civility."

At this Althea burst into tears, said he was very cruel, and left the room.

"What the devil is the matter with the girl?" cried Fred, whose courage rose still higher as the enemy disappeared.

"Hush, hush! my dear boy," said the old lady, "I spoke as sharp as I did, because I thought your sister had a little forgot herself—but an old woman like me can see how the wind blows, better than a young man can be expected to do. Trust me, my dear cousin, to read a young woman's heart! Your sister was mightily smitten with Mr. Noel Branzholm's good looks, and though she would sooner die than own it, I think, but for these unhappy troubles, 'twould have been a match between 'em."

"Well, they say women are like the ways of Providence—past finding out," said Fred. "So I'm to understand, Cousin Maverick, that because Althea has a sneaking kindness for Branzholm, she shows it by wanting to turn his brother out of doors?"

"That brother, my dear cousin," said the old lady, emphatically shaking her plump forefinger at him, "hath been the means of seducing Noel from his allegiance. Doth that enlighten you?"

"Perfectly, perfectly! I protest, Cousin Maverick, you are

a witch!" exclaimed Fred, greatly struck by this explanation of the mystery. "I must say, though, I think she carries her resentment to too high a pitch. But she'll relent, when she sees how low poor Fleming has been brought."

That same evening the patient arrived at Mrs. Maverick's hospitable door in a hackney-coach, supported by Fred, who, if a rough, was not an inefficient nurse. The surgeon, a good-natured man, had come too, and between them they got Jasper upstairs, and into the bedroom which Mrs. Maverick and Althea had prepared for him—and where he presently fainted away. It was Althea who first called attention to this, and ran to fetch a burnt feather; and for a day or two, she was, to quote her own expression, as attentive as though she had approved of her patient's conduct. Under the application of the feather, Jasper came round very quickly, and protested that he felt perfectly well, but for some feelings of natural shame at having been overcome for a moment.

"The fact is, Miss Digby," he said, with a most provoking coolness, and as though he gloried in reminding her of whence he had come,—“jail-birds are unused to so many stairs as I have just mounted.”

Althea looked at him in speechless wrath. Did he intend to defy her? she asked herself. If so, he was soon punished, for his attempt to outbrave pain and weakness proved a signal failure. He was for many days too ill to do anything but submit to be nursed like a child. He was even past making any exasperating observations—which was perhaps the reason why Althea was for a short time so kind and gentle in her manner towards him, that Fred told her she was a good girl after all.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

TREATS OF THE SLAMMING OF A DOOR.

When I was sick you gave me bitter pills.

TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA.

AFTER the first few days, however, and as soon as Jasper began to revive a little under his more favourable conditions, Althea's behaviour was not so satisfactory. It is true she took her full share of waiting upon him—indeed, she was always on

the watch to do him some little service—to bring him some delicacy prepared by Mrs. Maverick's own hands, to fold the *Massachusetts Gazette* and the *Boston Post Boy*—or to draw down the jealousies, if the sun shone in his eyes. She had ample opportunities of rendering him small kindnesses of this description, as he was for a long time extremely feeble, and it was weeks before he was allowed to use his right arm. But Althea contrived to do all these charitable offices in a manner which left a sting behind. “In performing these acts of Christian duty, I never forget that your sufferings are but the just punishment of your enormous offences.” This was what Althea's manner said—though her only overt reproaches were conveyed by means of one of the ministerial organs already mentioned, which she never failed to lay beside Jasper's chair, folded with the most virulent article outside, so that it must needs catch his eye.

As Jasper slowly amended, Althea's temper became still more uncertain; and although she never allowed the conversation to turn on exciting subjects, she could not always refrain from a side hit—so skilfully given as to admit of no reply. She would calmly allude to what might be expected when the reinforcements arrived from England—and be in the middle of a remark about the visits she hoped then to pay in the South, before Jasper could make up his mind whether to notice her words or not. He thought he saw, under all her constrained kindness, a deep-rooted personal aversion to himself, and a fear lest her brother's good-natured geniality should ever make him forget that she saw in him only a traitor and rebel, who had been taken in out of compassion as he lay dying at her door.

One day, not long after he was able to crawl into the drawing-room and sit in Mrs. Maverick's own particular chair, Althea's “throw-a-poor-dog-a-bone” manner—which yet was always kept just within the limit of good-breeding—goaded him out of his resolve to appear unconscious of her unkindness. The surgeon had pronounced him convalescent—his wounds were healing, and his broken bones were beginning to unite. All these circumstances are, as every one knows, enough to try the temper of an angel, and Jasper was very irritable. When, therefore, Althea brought him a cup of particularly exquisite lemonade, made after a secret recipe known only to Mrs. Maverick, together with the latest issue of the *Post Boy*, on which appeared the words, “THE PSALM-SINGER UN-

MASKED," Jasper pushed the tray into the middle of the table—so abruptly that some of the lemonade was spilled into the saucer. "If I am sick enough to lie here and drink lemonade, Miss Digby," he said—his thin worn face flushing and his hand trembling so violently that, in the attempt to pour back the spilled lemonade, he drenched the *Post Boy*—"I am too sick to swallow the rhodomontade of hired scribblers. I shall esteem it a kindness if you will spare me until, if ever again, I am able to defend the cause I am ready to die for, but am now past even speaking for!"

Jasper became so ghastly pale as he said this, that Althea was frightened. But she was angry too—angry with him for having brought himself to this pass—and for other reasons—some of them too complicated to be put even into thought.

"You doubtless think me a miserable effeminate wretch, Miss Digby," he went on, a little colour presently returning to his face. "But the question is too burning, too personal, to be any less than a question of life and death to me. It is embittered by a thousand personal griefs—friends estranged, friends slain; judge if a sick man dare think much of such things! I know," he continued more calmly, and not without a ring of proud protest in his voice, which was steady enough now,—“I know that I owe all to your compassion, and nothing to your regard. You need not fear that I can ever forget it, or imagine you would not have shown as much to any other dying wretch. I have seen pity striving in you with the fear of being misunderstood, and my own pride has made yours more easy to bear.”

"I am sorry to have offended you," said Althea—her tone was sufficiently cold and haughty, but her face had crimsoned, though the knowledge that she had succeeded in offending him brought with it a considerable amount of satisfaction. "I supposed you would be anxious to learn how your friends fared"—she could not resist laying a scornful emphasis on the word *friends*—"and I thought this the least offensive method of apprising you of it."

"You wilfully misunderstand me!" cried Jasper, "and as wilfully, I think, refuse to see how great are the wrongs which you call it rebellion to resent."

"I see, Mr. Fleming," said Althea in a very hard tone, "that you and your friends are bringing about a war between two peoples who speak the same language. Any day—this very

moment, perhaps, while I say the words"—here all the hardness went out of her voice, and she spoke with deep suppressed feeling—"my own brother's blood may be shed—by a man who is of the same nation as himself, yet has been taught to hate him as a deadlier foe than a Frenchman!"

"Tis you that hate us, Miss Digby; we have been patient, but the patient ass revolts at last. But what is the use of talking?" he said wearily. "Every word you say is a fresh sign that the quarrel is gone too far for words to be of any avail—the hatred which has been growing up between us so long can never now be uprooted but in fair fight. Perhaps we may so learn to respect one another—at present we can but hate and despise one another."

"You who talk so much of your country, Mr. Fleming," said Althea, looking down on him from under her long dark eyelashes, and finding a strange pleasure in being inexorable, "I wonder you should wish me not to love mine!"

"And hate your country's enemy," he said sadly. "'Tis the almost necessary consequence at such a pass as this. A brother offended is harder to be won than a fenced city. If I was a Frenchman, there's a native generosity in an English bosom, which would have made you forget your nation's quarrel with mine. And yet my obligation to you is so infinite, that 'tis scarce generous in you to show so plainly the aversion you feel."

"Indeed, Mr. Fleming, I was not aware that I had been wanting in good manners," returned Althea coldly. But she was on the point of relenting when he spoiled all by saying peevishly,—“Pray oblige me by taking these scurrilous papers away!"

"I am extremely sorry you don't like the *Post Boy*," she said with the most provoking calmness. "And very sorry too that I can't get you a copy of the *Spy* instead."

So saying she took up the *Post Boy*, and walked out of the room with considerable dignity—and Jasper would have had the worst of this encounter but for a gust of wind which happened at the instant of her going out to so snatch the door from her hand (somewhat encumbered by the *Post Boy*), that she appeared to have slammed it behind her. This cruelly jarred poor Jasper's broken bones, but was indirectly the cause of Althea's mending her manners; and upon the whole he had cause to be glad that it had happened.

Mrs. Maverick was coming downstairs just as the door banged, and Althea's bearing as she swept by her cousin plainly revealed that something was amiss. "The girl has been baiting that poor young man again, I'll be bound!" she thought, as she went in to the patient. "I declare she is as proud as Lucifer!"

Mrs. Maverick made a mental memorandum to give her spirited young relative a piece of her mind; and this she took an opportunity of doing on the following day, when Jasper, who was not so well, kept his room until after dinner. It happened that Mr. Harrison Gray had given them a call, and in asking after "the prisoner," had observed that he was a lucky rascal, to get a beautiful young woman to make his gruel for him, when, if he had his deserts, he ought to be hung in chains on Charlestown Neck alongside of Mark, the highwayman—to which Althea had returned that he had been pretty severely punished, and that as his brother had rendered hers a great service, she hoped there was no harm in showing him a little common humanity. "Of course," she added in a voice which she believed she had succeeded in making as hard as her heart, "we cannot look on him as an ordinary prisoner of war; but we could scarce have avoided doing what we have done, under the circumstances—'tis not done for his own sake."

Even Mrs. Maverick thought this was carrying loyalty too far—especially when combined with the banging of the patient's door—for Althea had been much too proud to say that this was an accident. So as soon as Mr. Gray had taken his leave (with a message for Mr. Fleming that he hoped to see him shortly restored to health and a sense of his duty), she began upon her cousin.

"My dear Althea," said the old lady, putting on her spectacles, and looking at Althea over them, "I think you cannot be aware of the great harshness you show, whenever Mr. Fleming is mentioned. In his present suffering condition, I'm really surprised at you. Your brother Fred is much displeased with your manner to Mr. Fleming, and has several times begged me to speak to you about it. He is in a very poor way, and if he should not get over it, you would not forgive yourself. 'Tis positively inhumane." Mrs. Maverick netted away vigorously as she said this. A glance at Althea showed her that that young lady was looking out of window, and apparently had not heard her.

"He is of course a very foolish and wrong-headed young man," she observed after a minute or two of silence. "But he is the brother of a person to whom you are under an undoubted obligation, and who is so devoted to him that he will think more of a kindness shown his brother than if it was done to himself. 'Tis true that Mr. Branhholm is unfortunately mixed up with the rebels—but as I've repeatedly told you, the weight of punishment will fall on the New England States—as you see it has done already. Virginia is a loyal Province at heart, and will be let off easy. All the best blood of the Colonies is in Virginia," continued the old lady, unconsciously bridling. "My dear mother always felt that—although my father's connections was among the oldest families of Massachusetts. I've very little doubt that, on his submission, Mr. Noel would come off with a fine."

Mrs. Maverick paused again—to allow time for these words to produce their effect. Althea still stood by the window. Mrs. Maverick thought she perceived a slight droop of the head, and was encouraged to renew the attack more directly.

"I do really wish, my dear, you would be a little more womanly in your behaviour to poor Mr. Fleming," she said—wishing that Althea would speak, or at least look round. "I think he feels it. I have observed his eyes following you about the room in a very affecting manner—I've been quite sorry for the poor young man. I'm sure I disapproved of him as much you can do, when he was fomenting rebellion ; but 'tis the boast of a true-born Briton to be generous to the vanquished. I feel no difficulty in being civil to him, and I don't suppose you pretend to be more loyal than me." As Mrs. Maverick said this, she looked every inch Governor Hutchinson's cousin. "I'm sure," she continued, "when I see him looking so ill, and yet so obstinate and wrong-headed, I feel as vexed with him as if he was my own son."

Still Althea made no sign. There was a long pause, during which nothing was heard but the snapping of the netting-pin, as Mrs. Maverick deftly wove her meshes. At last, Althea went to the door, and there—with her hand on the lock, and her back turned to her cousin—she said in a very low voice; "I am sorry you and Fred think I have been inhumane—I did not intend it."

"Bless my heart!" thought the old lady, laying down her netting, and staring at the door—which Althea had closed behind her as gently as though she had feared to awaken her

venerable relative. "Bless my heart! I believe the girl was crying! That hint about Noel told well—I thought as it would!"

Mrs. Maverick resumed her netting with a complacent smile playing about her handsome mouth, and the glow of an approving conscience in her bosom. Neither the smile nor the glow had died away, when the door again opened, and Jasper came in—looking so pale and ill that Mrs. Maverick wondered indignantly how Althea could be so unfeeling; and rising instantly, she insisted on installing him in her own armchair. "Nay, I consider it yours while you are an invalid, Mr. Fleming," she said briskly, fairly forcing Jasper into it, who was still too weak to resist so much physical energy. "There—now you will be comfortable," said the good lady, taking another seat; "and I shall just be as well here. If you are looking for that naughty girl," she continued, observing that Jasper's eyes sought the chair near the window where Althea usually sat, "I don't think you'll see her for a while. She has gone to her room—I hope, penitent. I have been scolding her roundly for her incivility to you. In your present state I think it positively cruel, and so I've told her, and I think she felt it. Her brother is quite provoked at her. She is a warm-hearted girl at bottom, though I can hardly expect you to believe it. But if you could see her with your brother, you would not know her for the same creature. However, I've told her that high principles are consistent with feminine gentleness, and I hope she'll remember it."

During this speech, Jasper changed colour so often that Mrs. Maverick began to fear that perhaps her words to Althea were truer than she herself had believed, and that Jasper might indeed not get over it. "The slightest emotion throws him into a perfect fever," she thought; "and then that hard-hearted girl goes and bangs the door! I could box her ears!"

Mrs. Maverick would have been astounded to hear that she had herself just hurt Jasper much more than Althea had done when she slammed that door—so little can we sometimes judge how our words or deeds will affect another. And when Jasper did speak, his manner was so calm, and his words were so reasonable, that Mrs. Maverick's conscience continued to approve her. "If you allude to yesterday," he said, with—as Mrs. Maverick noticed—a very weary smile, "I happened to be looking at the door at the moment, and I saw that it escaped from Miss Digby's hand; I am convinced 'twas a pure accident."

"I hope it was," said Mrs. Maverick. "At any rate, Mr. Fleming, 'tis very good-natured of you to say so, and I trust Althea is ashamed of herself."

Althea probably was, for she sent word at tea-time that she had a headache, and would not come down.

The next day, she and Mr. Fleming chanced to be alone for some time after dinner. It was a very hot day, and there was no breeze astir to slam the doors. Fragrant airs floated in from the country, and mingling with the dusty air of the town, revived the pent-up townspeople.

"Oh, how I wish we could get out into a country lane!" exclaimed Althea, as she breathed such a whiff of summer-sweetness. Then, having broken the silence which had been hanging over them both, she went on hastily,— "Mr. Fleming, I should like to tell you that I did not intend to bang that door yesterday."

"I knew you did not," replied Jasper quietly. "It was an accident—I saw it."

"I have been—I don't know what I have been—but I ask your pardon," continued Althea in an unsteady voice, and with downcast eyes.

"I am prepared to pardon you for anything," said Jasper, with a mournful smile, which Althea did not see—her eyes being fixed on the buckle on his shoe. "But I should like to know what you ask it for."

"For—for being—for behaving——"

"For remembering I am a rebel, Miss Digby? Nay, I never wished you to forget it."

So nicely are feelings balanced in the human breast, that these words irritated Althea singularly. "Nor could I forget it," she said, looking up, with a relapse into haughtiness; "but I ought to have remembered that an enemy ceases to be an enemy, when he is vanquished."

It was a good thing that Althea had resumed her study of Jasper's shoe-buckle, for he looked decidedly amused at this speech.

"'Tis true—I was vanquished," he said. "Then is it peace between us?" he asked, with so much sweetness in look and voice, that Althea's pride once more smoothed its ruffled plumes. She held out her hand, and Jasper took it in his for the space of a moment; but he did not kiss it, as she thought he was going to do. She would have been almost as angry

with him for doing so, as she was piqued that he did not. "I owe my life to your brother," he said, "and I shall never forget that."

He sat so still after Althea had left him, that Mrs. Maverick, who peeped in at the open door, thought he was asleep; but he was only thinking.

"It was better not," he said to himself, as the sleepy afternoon seemed to grow hotter and more breathless. "The path is difficult enough already."

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE WAY TO GLORY.

THE Way to Glory leads over rapid rivers and headlong torrents, over lakes, bogs, and swamps, by craggy ravines, and up stony mountains, where the road is always growing rougher and steeper, and the air more piercing keen. When the wilderness of the forest is left behind, there begins another wilder waste of morass, and rock, and brushwood—scantier and scantier, as the way—it has long ceased to be a road, or even a path—toils up and up—until the rain turns to snow, and the wind to ice. This is the way to glory—and all the while we are not quite sure of our way. What if we find we have missed it—crossed at the wrong carrying-place, or gone astray in the mountains of Maine—when we trust at last to see the waters of the great Chaudière Pond? The seekers after glory have eaten salt pork till their souls loathe it; and now there is but half a square inch of that for each man's dinner, to be swallowed raw, with half a biscuit for supper.

"We must be near the top now," they say to one another. They press on for dear life through the frightful loneliness. For more than ten days, they have seen no trace of human habitation or presence, except a single deserted wigwam which they passed three days ago. Noel Branzholm finds his spirits almost as much oppressed by the frightful savageness of the landscape as by the scanty food, the biting cold, and the toils of the way.

This little party of eleven in all has been sent on by Colonel Arnold, to explore and mark the best route—Arnold's only knowledge of which is derived from the journal of an English officer of engineers—who came this way fifteen years ago—some

information from Indians, and a very rude map. The expedition marches in three divisions, with a day between each, to prevent confusion. First, comes Morgan of Virginia, with his three companies of riflemen, and among these are Meshach Pike and Noel Branzholm. Then Greene of Rhode Island, with three companies of infantry; then Meigs of Massachusetts, with four; and, lastly, Enos of Connecticut, with three.

Noel is by this time not a little proud of his own discernment, in enlisting under Colonel Benedict Arnold. If never-ceasing vigilance, far-reaching forethought, and absolutely dauntless valour, can ensure success, this expedition is certainly on the way to glory. At each halting-place, Arnold sees each several division re-embark, and when the last has started, passes them all in a fast birch canoe, paddled by Indians, and waits for them at the next halt. But the way is longer and more difficult than he had bargained for, and the weather is breaking; so he sends on a little band of volunteers to find the best way.

Even this little band is now reduced to four, and a guide or two. At the first pond, where the Great Carrying-place begins, the weakest were left behind, with half the provisions, while the other half pushed on to the Dead River. By day they scramble through the wilderness, and by night they sleep on branches of fir and hemlock. So rare is foot of man, red or white, in this untrodden wild, that one of their muskets, lost or forgotten, will lie here undiscovered for seventy-five years.

Two days of hard travelling on half an inch of raw pork brings the van of the exploring party to a great pine, forty feet high, without a branch.

"From here we should see the Chaudière's head-waters," says Archibald Steele, the young leader of the party. "Who will climb up and look?"

They all stand round in breathless suspense, while Robert Cunningham swarms up. They scarcely dare call to him to know what he can see. The next five minutes will decide whether they have lost their way. But no—from the tree-top he sees the river winding away to the north, till it spreads into the great lake fifteen miles off.

And now, having found the way to glory, back with all speed! The storm breaks on them—they are drenched with sleet—the trees crack and tumble like that spruce-pine which

fell in the Shadow of Death. Noel, looking back on this, wonders how he could have thought it so terrible.

When they have picked up the weaker half of their party, and are fairly on the road back to the main body, it is a race between them and hunger. On the second day, they shoot a diver. They boil him at night; every one throws his own bit of pork (marked with a skewer that he may know it again) into the pot, and that night they sup on the broth. Next morning, after a short uneasy sleep on the spongy ground, each man takes his own inch of pork and swallows it. Then the diver is divided, hunter's fashion. "Whose shall this be?" cries the carver, holding up the head; and Noel, his back turned to the pot, says, "Mine." So all is done fairly.

Another weary day and night go by, while the starving explorers leave many a mile behind; and then, next day, they run one of their canoes against a sunken tree, and tear the frail skiff from stem to stern. The rent was done in one disastrous moment, but many precious hours are spent on the mending. They find some birches, and strip off the bark; they dig up cedar-roots for thread, and collect pitch from the pines. At last the rent is made whole, and, weary and hungry, they set off once more.

As the sun went down on this day, Noel, whose canoe was a little behind, and who was light-headed with hunger and fatigue, was tormented by strange fancies. He thought he saw figures flitting before and behind him, on the rocky banks of the river. He fancied he heard Polyphemus croak,—“King Philip's coming;” but it was only the inarticulate cry of some bird that had never known man. Once, when the rays of the sinking sun fell red and low, darting arrows of light among the tree-trunks, he could have sworn he saw Mary Fleming, walking a little in advance of him under the forest trees. From time to time, she turned her head—as if to look at him—and stretching out her arm, pointed in the direction in which he was going. It seemed to him that the apparition smiled.

“Am I asleep? or am I going mad?” thought Noel, rubbing his eyes—which indeed were heavy with want of rest. “It won't do to wreck another canoe,” he thought, rousing himself. The wraith of Mary had vanished; but presently he saw it again—waving, pointing, and smiling as before.

“Is she come to warn me of my death?” he thought, with a contraction of his heart. “Am I to die here in the wilderness, where no one will ever know my grave?”

At that moment, he heard a sharp crack of a rifle on in front, followed instantly by a shout. The vision had vanished ; but it could scarcely have been a messenger of ill, for when Noel, rowing hard, had come up with the others, he found them leaping ashore round a moose-deer, which lay dead on the bank.

It was nearly a week before they regained the main body. The various divisions of it, push on as fast as they would, found it terrible work. At Norridgewack Falls they left all trace of man behind—their last sight of man's handiwork being the ruined altar and chapel where good Father Ralle had once laboured for six-and-twenty years, and around whose bloody grave the wilderness had now grown rank for fifty. The cross which marked it was the last Christian emblem they saw for many and many a weary day. Then came swamp, bog, precipice, mountain, stream, and rapid. Sometimes they row, sometimes they push their canoes along with poles ; often they jump ashore and pull with ropes. At night, their lodging is on the cold ground—and often in the morning they find that Dame Nature has flung a second blanket on that hard bed, all woven of the whitest new-fallen snow.

And so, over one carrying-place after another, they come at last to a boggy swamp, grown over with ghastly white moss and wizened bushes, where they sink knee-deep in the mud as they carry the canoes across, until they launch them on the swift-running waters of the Dead River. Summer travellers admire the grandeur of desolation and solitude ; but these winter-beset soldiers, toiling their painful way up the steepes which lead to glory, call the ragged woods and rugged mountains "hideous."

Memory, like a magic-lantern, sheds its light here and there on the darkness of the past. When Noel Branhholm was an old man he loved to tell his grandchildren of certain incidents, which still stood out as clear as ever through the mist of years. He was never tired of telling, nor they of listening, how, one evening, they came to a river in flood, and for a moment could see no dry ground—until they made out, through the gathering gloom, a knoll rising out of the submerged forest—how they gained this, and then had to wade to a tree, and cut it down for fuel ; and how, having at last coaxed the damp wood into a blaze, they gathered around the fire. Perhaps this night stood out so clear in Noel's memory, because Colonel Arnold himself was with their company, and (though Noel seldom

mentioned this when he told the story) had shared his cake of baked flour, which was all the supper that was forthcoming—no salmon-trout having been caught since the great storm a few days back. Colonel Arnold had talked with Noel as familiarly as ever, and they had wondered together how young Aaron Burr was faring, who had just been sent off disguised as a Catholic priest with a verbal message to General Montgomery.

"*This* is a famous opportunity—if only any of us live through it," Arnold said to Noel that night—and, as the fire-light flickered on his dark face, Noel saw an exulting smile play over it—"but the way is worse and longer than I thought, or than my map makes it out."

Provisions after this ran very short indeed, and the road grew worse and worse, till at a "ripply place" seven batteaux were lost, and the men barely escaped with their lives. Noel's company coming thither, found a notice to this effect nailed to a tree, and looked at each other in dumb dismay.

They have eaten the barber's powder-bag by this time. They stumble on, not quite sure of the way, till they come upon a batteau which Arnold, who has dashed forward as usual, has left for them. And so to a sandy beach where some of the men, seeing roots growing in the sand, dart out of rank, and tear them up like wild beasts.

"Why did they not all die, grandfather?" ask the children, when they hear these gruesome stories.

"Well, my dears, I used often to wonder why we did not," answers the old gentleman. "I really think we was kept alive by laughing at Mrs. Greer, Sergeant Greer's wife, who was such a figure of fun as never was seen, wading with her skirts tucked up. That woman had a genius for finding the shallowest places. The good lady was of a formidable size, but she trudged valiantly after her Sergeant—as virtuous as she was ample. There was not one of us durst let her see us grin—but grin we did. Then there was poor Shafer, the drummer-boy, who was the butt of us all. Once, I fished him out of the water, when he had tumbled, drum and all, off a log by which we were crossing—and didn't hurt the drum neither."

But the story which most thrilled the marrow of the children's bones, was the one which told how their grandfather, as he sat one evening by the fire, thinking of Old Virginia, and wishing he could just once hear Polyphemus say,—“I see you!” smelt a peculiar and not altogether unsavoury smell coming, as

it seemed, from a pot boiling over another fire a little way off. Sergeant Greer presently brought him a tin cup, with some greenish broth in it. The sergeant said it was bear—his honest countenance so plainly giving his words the lie that Noel insisted on knowing more, and Greer thereupon confessed that it was *dog*—Captain Dearborn's beautiful great dog, that every one was so fond of.

"But you wouldn't have it, would you, grandfather?" the children always asked at this point of the story; and their grandfather answered, as was expected of him, "No, my dears; my gorge rose at it somehow, and I gave the cup back to Greer, as quick as I could. It looked like hell-broth."

After this, some of them tried to sup off their moccasins and breeches; but alas! no amount of stewing availed here. Even the Sergeant could make nothing—though he gave them a fair trial—of a pair of old moose-hide small-clothes. Yet no one grumbled, for every one knew that Arnold was doing his best. He had pushed on now, with a small party of the strongest, for Sartigan, the nearest French settlement. He reached it late one night, and started with supplies next morning at sunrise. They came but just in time—and when the starving companies saw the cattle coming up the river, they wept for joy.

Not till now did Noel's young vigour give in—and still he struggled on by the friendly help of his companions, until, as they approached the St. Lawrence, he felt his strength fail him altogether, and sat down on a log, wondering if—as had happened to so many others who had died a few minutes after they gave in and sat down—this were to be the end of his march. As he sat there, conscious, but almost indifferent as to what should become of him, Colonel Arnold, riding in the rear, saw him, and dismounting, ran up to a settler's house close by.

"The man will take care of you—he is an honest fellow," said the Colonel, running out again in less than five minutes, followed more slowly by a farmer-looking man in a blanket-coat and a high cap, and coming to where Noel was sitting. "Get well as soon as you can, and come on."

Then he put a couple of silver dollars into Noel's pocket—Noel was almost past moving a finger, though he managed to sit up—and saying,—"In case of necessity," squeezed his hand kindly, and in another moment was galloping after his men.

The terror of Arnold's approach had already spread as far as Quebec itself, where, by the mistake of *tôle* for *toile*, it was

reported that the men of Boston had come down over the mountains, clad in iron shirts.

And now, as soon as General Montgomery and his force can join him from Montreal, Benedict Arnold means to try and climb by the same way that, sixteen years ago, James Wolfe went up to death and glory.

CHAPTER XXX.

THE BLOCKADE OF BOSTON.

And what have you got now with all your designing,
But a town without victuals to sit down and dine in?

THE IRISHMAN'S EPISTLE.

JASPER'S recovery was slow—slower than his medical attendants could well account for. They, however, finally discovered the cause to be the patient's anxiety about his friends and the state of affairs in general. That he was depressed and gloomy was an undoubted fact. Even Captain Digby's conversation could not always cheer him.

The Captain kept his friend (as he had really by this time come to consider Jasper) informed of the progress of events; and Jasper, as he grew stronger, and able to walk out, had the opportunity of seeing for himself the entrenchments of Mr. Washington's army beyond Charlestown Neck, and sometimes had heard a distant shout, as some piece of artillery (notably the "Old Sow," brought from Ticonderoga) was placed in position. He also knew by a letter, which found its way to him in a somewhat mysterious manner, that his brother had started on his perilous expedition. Since then, the only events which had broken the monotony of the siege, were one or two other letters of remonstrance, sent by General Washington on the subject of the treatment of prisoners.

Gage had been deaf to the appeal of his old comrade; but Gage is no longer Governor of Massachusetts. His victory at Bunker's Hill had not been considered satisfactory. He lost too many men over it. Sir William Howe reigns in his stead—the last British Governor who shall ever mount the steps of the Province House of Boston.

One other excitement there has been of a mild sort—Dr. Church is, it is said, clapped up by his friends the rebels, on a

charge of treasonable correspondence. Besides this, there is really nothing, except the raids of Captain Wall of the *Rose*, and a cock-and-bull story about the ghost of Dr. Sewall. It seems that a good old woman, passing by the South Meeting (which has been desecrated by Burgoyne's dragoons, and Deacon Hubbard's fine carved pew carried off and made a pigstye of), uplifted her shrill old voice in lamentation, declaring that the sight was enough to make Dr. Sewall's ghost rise and protest—and so it did, one night shortly after, so frightening the Scotch sentinel, that his shrieks awoke the guard at the Province House over the way.

All through the summer the town was sickly. As winter approaches, one or two snows arrive from England, with pork and claret and other stores; but the troops feel that they are being left to get themselves out of a bad scrape as best they can. General Washington is too strong to be forced; the chief hope lies in the freezing over of the harbour, which may now be looked for shortly. Anticipating fighting his way out over the ice, Howe does his best to keep up the discipline of his troops, who have grown slovenly. They even come on duty in dirty shirts, leggings hanging about their knees, their hair badly powdered, and smoke when under arms.

After the New Year comes in (heralded with great rejoicings in the enemy's camp, which are as vinegar upon nitre to the beleaguered regiments), indignation at receiving no succour rises very high. Houses are being pulled now for firewood; the Old North went long ago—no more traitorous lanterns will be hung out from its steeple. The garrison's only diversions are a few skirmishes, and the theatricals in Fanueil Hall, and the Concert Hall—where the ragged Provincials are made exquisite fun of by their almost as ragged foes. There is to be a capital farce called the "Blockade of Boston" enacted shortly.

Meanwhile, if the blockaded forces did but know it, the Provincial army has no powder, and half the regiments disbanded on New Year's Day—their term being expired. But the new Union flag flies bravely in the wind, with its thirteen stripes and the crosses of St. Andrew and St. George, and Jasper's ears are gladdened by hearing the distant shouts which salute its unfurling.

Through the dreary monotony of these months, Althea had almost laid aside her rancour, and had even brought herself to talk calmly with Jasper of the great question, which had become the central fact in all their lives. If she ever felt disposed

to relapse into her old manner, she seldom did so, after a rumour reached Boston that the expedition to Quebec had failed, and that those who had not fallen in the assault were now prisoners of war.

One day, when the continued mild weather had almost destroyed the garrison's hopes of escaping except by ship, Miss Digby returned from a visit in the town, with the news that Sir William Howe had resolved to evacuate Boston, unless he was relieved by a certain day.

"What shall you do?" asked Jasper—to whom this was no news. There were still a good many rebels left in Boston, and Jasper could, had he chosen, have added the information that General Washington was contemplating giving a gentle flip to Sir William, if he were much longer in making up his mind to a move.

"I shall do as Cousin Maverick does," replied Althea. "Many of the loyal townsmen, I am told, intend to take refuge on board the King's ships. Of course I shall not return to England while Fred is in the Colonies. I've no natural protector left there—nor any relation with whom I should care to live."

"Would anything induce you to return to Oglethorpe?" asked Jasper, after a pause, during which he had doubted whether he should ask it.

"Nothing," answered Althea shortly. Then, as if in apology, she added not ungently,—“Much as we may lament it, we shall be enemies, as soon as the King's troops leave Boston.”

There was silence between them for many minutes—a painful silence, which neither knew how to break—and then Althea said impetuously,—“Mr. Fleming, have you considered all the consequences which may ensue, supposing even that you succeed? Are you so sure of your ground?”

“I think,” he said, “that I, and all but the most thoughtless—and there are always all sorts of men mixed up in great affairs—have considered the consequences, so far as is lawful.”

“So far as is lawful?” asked Althea, looking at him in grave surprise; “you surely can scarce mean that we should act without reflecting on the consequences of our actions?”

“This is a perplexing world, Miss Digby,” said Jasper—Althea thought he said it very sadly. “I believe 'twas intended to be so, in God's wisdom, as a means to our probation. Where were that, if a man could see all the road he is going, mapped forth plainly at starting?”

"Yet surely," she said, "when we foresee ill consequences, we should pause?"

"Principles, not consequences, must guide us," returned Jasper. "If we regarded remote consequences, 'twould palsy all action—and we may well be mistaken in our foreseeing, but hardly in our seeing. What possible act of any man's life is there, that might not peradventure turn to harm? No!" he cried, his eyes suddenly kindling; "let us do our part in this our day, and leave the rest to God! 'Tis the manifest duty of the people of these Provinces to preserve the liberties handed down to us by our forefathers. Perhaps it had been better for us that those liberties had never been threatened—with that we've no concern—'tis a barren speculation. They are threatened, and 'tis our duty to defend them, as I for one will do, with every drop of blood in my body!"

Althea did not speak for many minutes, and when she did, her voice trembled. "And what of those who see it their duty to oppose you?" she asked.

"To their own Master they stand or fall," he replied. "It seems to me, that when we give an account of our deeds, 'twill matter more how and in what spirit we did them, than what we did. But however this may be, my own duty is all that concerns me, and that I must do—and by God's help I will!"

Althea rose slowly from her chair, and went out of the room, only saying sadly; "I cannot contend with you, but my duty must be for ever opposed to yours."

It was on the evening of this day, that the Farce of the "Blockade of Boston" was given in the Concert Hall. Althea (who perhaps thought she had been a little too easy on Mr. Fleming in the afternoon) made up for it in the evening, by asking him, as a particular favour, to be good enough to escort her cousin and herself to this precious performance. But she was deservedly punished. Everybody was there, including Governor Howe; but the play had not gone far before Althea was forced to confess to herself, that she wished she had not brought Mr. Fleming to see British officers laughing at an enemy they could scarcely be said to have yet beaten. She was mortified when Mrs. Maverick laughed at the antics of a fellow got up to travesty Sam Adams, with wild gray hair, a wig all awry, and holes in his stockings. Jasper saw her annoyance with inward satisfaction, but he looked on in grim silence until there was a pause in the piece.

"I do not think, Miss Digby, that you despise this fooling much less than I do," he observed. For a moment, her eyes met his. "I am ashamed of it," she said, with an irrepressible movement of indignation—"ashamed that my countrymen can think to hide their disgrace under so sorry a jest. It will be time enough to make merry at our enemy's expense, when he no longer holds us besieged."

She paused, and glanced at Mrs. Maverick. Seeing that estimable lady deep in a greasy little programme—hastily written on a sheet of paper torn out of an account-book—which she had procured from the door-keeper, Althea turned again to Jasper. "Mr. Fleming," she said hurriedly, "there's something I've wished to say to you, and to-night may be the last opportunity I shall ever have of saying it. I hardly know why I say it—yet I must, before our paths divide for ever. I once, by a pure accident, overheard you say to your brother, that I was one of the women who make men traitors. I was very angry with you at the time; but since then I've wished to tell you that you did me an injustice. I should be glad indeed that any one should return to his allegiance—but it must be because he was convinced of his error. Loyal as I am to my country and my King, less than this could only move my contempt."

She had laid her hand lightly on his arm as she began—her touch rested there but an instant, but it seemed to reopen his wounds, and to burn like fire in his veins. Yet he spoke as calmly as though his heart were not throbbing as if it would leap out of his bosom. "I knew you had heard what I said—I saw it in your eyes," he answered. "I repented of the words as soon as I had uttered them—I had no right to form so hasty a judgement, and I have long since known that my words were as unjust as they were unwarrantable. I can only comfort myself by the reflection that no opinion of mine can have caused you much uneasiness."

Althea had risen to her feet—as Jasper supposed, to look for her brother. As she looked down on him, he saw a strange expression in her beautiful eyes, which flashed through the tears that suffused them. "You would hardly believe," she said, with a kind of proud humility, and forcing her lips to a smile, "how much uneasiness those words caused me." And then the curtain rose, and every one sat down, as a tall gaunt figure, arrayed like a hedge-general in ragged regimentals, and armed with a portentous rusty sword, came on the stage. Before,

however, this presentment of General Washington could open his mouth, a Sergeant rushed on behind him, exclaiming, "The Yankees are attacking our works on Bunker's Hill!"

His words were received with applause, as part of the play, and Captain Digby remarked to his friend the Ensign that the fellow did that capitally well! But almost before the words were said, every one in the hall was electrified at hearing Sir William Howe—who had instantly sprung to his feet—call out, "Officers, to your alarm-posts!"

Many of the ladies shrieked, and some of them fainted. The officers and soldiers present immediately left the hall, and as they went out a heavy booming sound, coming at regular intervals, filled the night air with its ominous tolling.

As the non-combatant portion of the audience poured confusedly out into the streets, Captain Digby snatched a moment to kiss his sister.

"Don't be uneasy, Ally," he said. "Remember you're a soldier's sister"—this, being precisely the fact which was making Althea uneasy, was not particularly consoling. "For my part," he continued, "a smart engagement would be a prodigious relief to my spirits—never was so hippped in all my life! I wish they was Frenchmen—'tis a cursed disagreeable thing to kill fellows that speak one's own language—but that's their affair—of course a soldier must do his duty, whether the enemy are Frenchmen or not. But it does come more natural to cut down a parley-voos." Here the Captain perceived Jasper, and became as red as his own coat. "At any rate, I shan't cut *you* down to-night, my dear fellow, and I hope I never shall," he said, extending his hand. "I can't of course ask you to wish me God speed—'tis to be expected you wish me at the devil, though I'm hanged if I can look on you as an enemy."

"I hope at least that you will return safe and sound to-morrow morning," said Jasper, shaking him warmly by both hands.

"Thank you, my dear fellow, thank you," cries the Captain. "Good-night, Ally; I shall be back in the morning—don't fret about me!"

Although the alarm was a true one, nothing very important happened that night; but a few mornings afterwards, Boston awoke to see Dorchester Heights occupied by General Thomas. As this placed the town at the enemy's mercy, Sir William Howe made instant preparations to attack with the ships. Meantime

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Putnam began to move down on the Charlestown side. A battle, to which Bunker's Hill should be a mere skirmish, seemed inevitable—when Heaven interposed. A furious wind sprang up, which increased to a storm so terrific that no boat could live in the surf. The human combatants were compelled to wait until the conflict of the elements had abated. In this predicament—abandoned by the home authorities, hemmed in by the enemy, the fleet and army complaining of each other—Sir William Howe called a council, at which it was resolved to evacuate.

There was an indirect attempt at driving a bargain with the enemy—who was to let Sir William depart in peace, on condition he did no mischief in the town. Mr. Crean Brush, however, was very busy for a day or two plundering stores—although Sir William sent round the provost and the hangman to string up the first man caught red-handed. But on the Saturday night, General Washington (who was afraid reinforcements might arrive, and spoil all) jogged Sir William's elbow, by throwing up a breast-work on Nook's Hill, which commands Boston Neck. This was coming to close quarters indeed; and a deserter bringing in a report that an immediate assault was intended, the troops began to embark at four o'clock on Sunday morning.

Great was the confusion in the dark streets and on the wharves. Seventy-eight ships and transports all getting ready for sea, and twelve thousand soldiers, sailors, and refugees all hurrying to embark—the last with their families and worldly effects, and obliged to man their own vessels, as men enough could not be spared from the transports. Members of Council, Commissioners, Custom-house officers, clergymen, merchants, farmers, tradesmen, mechanics, women and children, sick and wounded, were crowded into every available kind of transport. The men were glad to get out of the fever-stricken half-starved town, but the officers were in very poor spirits.

"'Tis a damned shame!" says Captain Digby. "We are left to get out of the hole as we can—no despatches since October!"

For they do not know that Ministers, being goaded with their neglect, did at last send a great supply—but so late in the season that half the ships were wrecked, and the British Channel was strewn with dead sheep and hogs.

But the refugees and the loyal inhabitants of Boston were the chief sufferers—leaving, as they did, country, home, friends, and often worldly goods behind them. One must needs feel a great pity for these unfortunate persons, whose consciences in

some cases, and whose fears in others, bade them side with their King, at the cost of every one of their old associations, and who (even those of them who were undoubtedly conscientious in their choice) have received but very little admiration, even from the side for which they made so great a sacrifice.

Captain Digby took leave of Jasper Fleming with many expressions of good-will, and begged him to give his most affectionate remembrances to Colonel and Mrs. Branzholm, Noel, and Miss Mary.

"'Tis a cursed thing we should be forced to be enemies, Fleming," he said, with a sincere forgetfulness of having once thought Jasper a detestable coxcomb. "I'm sure we was cut out to be friends, and it's given me the greatest pleasure to make your acquaintance."

"Don't say that, Digby," said Jasper, pressing his hand. "I shall always consider I owe you my life. But for you, I shouldn't be here."

"Don't speak of it, Fleming," cries Fred, "Noel did much more for me than ever I've done for you—which was mere common humanity, and a pleasure besides—and I beg you'll never think of it again. Well, God bless you—and don't forget to give my best respects to Miss Mary."

The parting between Jasper and Althea was rather bitter.

"To-day restores you to liberty and your friends," said the young lady, as she bade him farewell. "And I suppose the kindest wish I can form for you is that we may never meet again."

"Why should we not meet again in happier days, when our quarrel is reconciled?" said Jasper, holding her hand, and speaking in a quick agitated voice. "Sooner or later it must be so; this state of things cannot last for ever. Will you not at least give me a message for my mother and Noel?"

"Give my love to your mother and Mary," she replied; "and you may tell Noel that I wish I had repaid him better."

Jasper turned very pale, though he could have expected no other answer. He thanked her for all the kindness she had shown him in his illness. To Mrs. Maverick he expressed himself more strongly still; but in the nature of the case it was a very painful farewell, and there was soreness on both sides.

And so, leaving crows' feet and dummy sentinels on Bunker's Hill, to gain time, Sir William embarked, and dropped down towards Nantasket Roads; and the sceptre of New England had departed from Great Britain for ever.

It was as Althea had said; long before the ship which carried her had passed Castle William, the streets of Boston resounded to the beat of drum, as Ward marched in with the thirteen stripes flying in the gusty air; and Jasper Fleming was being eagerly greeted by friendly voices, who welcomed him almost as though he had been returned from the dead.

The very first news which he asked and heard was of the expedition to Quebec—concerning which disastrous rumours had already reached him. He now heard how Arnold, by almost superhuman daring and endurance, had struggled on to Quebec, in spite of Colonel Enos's desertion; how he had waited three weeks at Point Levy for Montgomery—who, having taken peaceable possession of Montreal, had, after a march only less toilsome than Arnold's, joined him with all the artillery he could muster. How they had besieged the town, amid the snows of a Canadian winter; how Arnold climbed up the way that Montgomery went with Wolfe sixteen years before, but found the garrison too strong. And then how, early in the dark of a December dawn, on the last morning of the year, and under cover of a furious snowstorm, the assault was made; how Montgomery fell under Cape Diamond—how Dearborn's company, having to cross the Charles at high-tide, were too late—how another company lost their way in the deep snow—yet how Arnold and Morgan and Thayer fought their way through the first barrier, and were pushing on, when a ball shattered Arnold's leg, and with his fall all was lost.

A letter had been received from Noel by Mr. Lawrence Fleming, addressed to Jasper, which now reached him, telling this and more.

"I had the happiness," wrote Noel, "to be able to assist the General back to quarters, every step marked in his blood. Now, wounded and helpless as he is, he is as good as a host. From his bed, he is blockading Quebec, and he swears he'll lead them a dance as soon as he can crawl. 'Tis as you say, dear brother; action is the way to forget one's private griefs. I think I hear you say, 'What, hath the boy any?' Yet who is there in these times but hath some friend to deplore—fallen in his country's cause, or, worse perhaps to bear, estranged by it? Meanwhile, action! action! And there will be plenty of that where General Arnold commands, I promise you! And let me tell you, you had never maintained the blockade of Boston so long, without the artillery the General took at the forts last May."

CHAPTER XXXI.

FLATBUSH.

It has, I believe, been already mentioned that Mrs. Maverick possessed a small estate on Long Island. It was a farm in King's County, about two miles from Flatbush, on the New Utrecht Road, and had been let for many years to a respectable Dutch farmer named Jacobus Quackenboss.

During the many days that Sir William Howe lay in Nantasket Roads, there was ample leisure for considering what had best be done. Captain Digby was urgent for Mrs. Maverick and his sister to go to Long Island. The fleet was only to remain at Halifax long enough to refit, and to be joined by the Admiral. Why, asked Fred, expose themselves to the hardships of the voyage there and back, when, by going at once to Long Island, they could await in comfort the coming of the fleet? Long Island was loyal—it had refused to send a deputy to the Continental Congress. Mrs. Maverick had many friends there. Mr. Justice Jones, whose seat was at Fort Neck, was her connection by marriage, and would be able to protect her—should protection be necessary.

"I believe, my dear Fred, you're right," said Mrs. Maverick. "I think we can't do better nor take your advice. What a comfort 'twill be, to be sure, to find oneself in a loyal neighbourhood!"

Althea was naturally reluctant to leave her brother, but she had really no choice in the matter. Mrs. Maverick inclined to go to Long Island, and the advantages of so doing were too obvious to be denied. So when Fred one afternoon came aboard the ship which carried Sir William and most of the ladies, bringing with him a rough-looking person whom he presented as the Captain of the *Three Friends* of Bristol, chartered by Sir William to carry despatches to Governor Tryon, she took a tearful farewell of her brother, and next morning was tossing in sight of the barren sands of Nantucket.

The *Three Friends* was doubtless a safe craft—being uncommonly broad in the beam for her tonnage—but she rolled so amazingly, that by the time she passed the Narrows, her unfortunate passengers were too anxious to feel themselves once more on *terra firma*, to pay much attention to the assurances of the

captain of the *Asia* man-of-war (whom they spoke), that they would find Long Island swarming with rebels.

These comfortable assurances received confirmation the very instant the ladies set foot ashore. Mrs. Maverick, somewhat unsteady on her feet from long tossing at sea in a small and crowded vessel, stepped upon her cloak, and had nearly fallen.

"Take my arm, Ma'am," said a seafaring man, stepping forward, and helping the old lady up the slippery steps—and Althea, looking up at the sound of a familiar voice, saw the angular form and lank countenance of Captain Ward. He knew her at once, and made her a polite bow.

"I hope I see you well, Ma'am," he said. "P'rhaps ef I was to hope anything mor'n that, I might ketch myself a-sayin' something orkard—least said is soonest mended. You know my sentiments, I reckon, and I reckon as I know yourn—so we'll both agree to hold our tongues. But I don't feel it any-ways agin my conscience to say as I hope the Lef-tenant's pretty well?"

"He is quite well, thank you, Captain Ward," replied Althea—who, somewhat to the Captain's surprise, and very much to his pleasure, had shaken hands with him, and evidently intended to be gracious.

"Is he now?" said the Captain, eyeing her with much interest. "He's a good-hearted young man. I shouldn't mind sailin' with him agin to-morrer. By the bye, I saw a friend o' yourn yesterday mornin', over to New York——" here the Captain indicated that city, by jerking his right thumb north-westwards. "Leastways, he was p'inted out to me. 'See that fine-lookin' man speakin' to Gin'ral Stirling?' says my friend to me; 'that's Gin'ral Branhholm o' Virginia.'"

It did not escape the Captain's penetration that Miss Digby looked pained and constrained, and seemed at a loss for a reply.

"Young Mr. Branhholm's a fine-sperrited young feller," he observed, with the benevolent intention of smoothing matters over. "No one can't help likin' him; but his brother's the man for my money. You should jest hear him speak at a town-meetin'—ahem!" Here the Captain suddenly perceived that he was on the point of saying something awkward, and hastily demanded how the ladies meant to do, and where they were going? and whether all that was their baggage?

"We are going to my farm at Flatbush," said Mrs. Maverick—in a tone which conveyed a whole volume of disapproval of

rebellion in general. "And we should be greatly indebted to you, sir, if you could procure us some conveyance."

"With the greatest of pleasure, Ma'am," returned the Captain, who was by this time leading the way into the parlour of the ferry inn. The inn kitchen was crowded with wagoners, who looked curiously at the ladies, as they passed into the parlour. Mrs. Maverick sank wearily into an elbow-chair.

"I only hope, child, we may not have cause to wish ourselves at Halifax!" she said in an impressive whisper, with a shake of her head towards the kitchen.

The Captain had promised to return as soon as possible, but had warned them that he might be absent some little time, so they ordered refreshments. The hostess, who waited upon them herself, told them that most of the Whigs they might see, "for I wouldn't advise anybody to call 'em rebels—not for 'em to hear you, that is," she remarked in a lower voice—were from Suffolk County.

"They've been at us these six months to send depputies to Congress," said the good woman—whose personal appearance much resembled that of Don Quixote's faithful squire, could that worthy have been arrayed in half-a-dozen petticoats. "But, Lord save you, we only want to be let alone. We don't wish the King no harm, and we don't want to burn our own fingers. But the Whigs are very mad; we had Colonel Heard here in the winter, tryin' to make us take the oath. And them as voted against a depputy had to give up their guns. They took my husband's; leastways,"—here she whispered mysteriously—"I hid his best fowling-piece in the loft, and they never found it. But they took the two old ones, and they threatened him what they'd do, if he smuggled any powder from the *Asia*. That's all their fear. They think the Tories are a-going to make a rising; but, lor', why should they? My husband says, let the King's soldiers do the fighting—they're paid for it—and let honest folks mind their own business."

"But we all ought to help, as loyal subjects, in these dreadful times," began Mrs. Maverick, scandalised at this want of public spirit.

"There's many ways of helpin', if you come to that, without runnin' your head agin a wall," remarked the hostess mysteriously. "I don't see as we're called to ruin ourselves—and the King perhaps never so much as hear of it."

A call to the kitchen coming at this moment, she left the

ladies to their repast. Although the parlour door was shut, the passage was so narrow that almost every word could be heard. There was a brisk discussion going on, and although it was not much past noon, the flowing bowl had evidently not flowed in vain.

"Look you, Jacob, you'd better take the oath, and put the accusers to silence," said a sarcastic voice.

"Swaller it like a four-pound shot, Jacob," chimed in some one else.

"Better turn patriot, Jacob, before it's too late," said a third voice, which potations had rendered mellow. "'Tud be a pity to have to tar and feather a man o' your figger; you ain't the build, nuther, for ridin' on a rail. Why be obstinate? Here's His Excellency's health, and Confusion to tyrants!"

There was an angry murmur of several voices, during which it may be presumed the speaker tossed off his glass, for, as if inspired by the toast, he presently struck into a song:

"Our country calls for swords and balls
Our drums aloud do rattle,
Our fifer's charms arouse to arms,
And Liberty calls to battle.
Tol de rol, de rol, de rol!

"You don't seem to like the song, Jacob," he continued—and there was a sound as though he slapped some one on the back not over gently. "There's another verse, as 'ull suit your complaint better:

"We have some noble Congressmen,
Elected for our nurses,
And every jolly farmer will
Assist 'em with their purses.
Tol de rol——

"That is, if he don't we shall be under the sad necessity of compellin' him," observed the singer, cutting short the burden of his song to interpolate this remark.

"And they may stay at home we say,
And enjoy their state of pleasure,
While we do go and fight their foe,
And save their lives and treasure.
Tol de rol, de rol, de rol!

"Ain't that only reasonable, Jacob? Oh, Jacobus Quackenboss, Jacobus Quackenboss, I have great searchings of heart concerning thee, Jacobus Quackenboss! I fear thou art a

time-server, Jacobus—a double-dealer, like thy namesake the patriarch—a truckler to the Powers that be—a——”

“You let Mr. Quackenboss alone in my house,” cried a coarser and louder voice. “He’s mindin’ his business—you mind yourn! This sort o’ song don’t go down here. I’m master in this house, an’ I’ll let you know it!”

“Don’t quarrel, gentlemen,” said another voice, in a tone of mock entreaty. “What will the ladies in the parlour think of us?” Here there was a laugh. “I know a verse or two of a song,” he continued, “that may be will please the company better—’twas made by a friend o’ my own.”

And to the tune of *Yankee Doodle* he struck up in a rollicking voice :

“Colonel Heard has come to town,
A-thinking for to plunder,
Before he’d done he had to run—
He heard the cannon thunder.

“And when he came to Hempstead town,
He heard the cannon rattle—
Poor Colonel Heard he ran away,
And dared not face the battle.”

There was a roar of laughter. Pots and glasses rattled and clattered, and a general hubbub followed, in which every one seemed to be talking at once.

Althea had listened with a heightened colour, and an expression of haughty anger. Mrs. Maverick looked anxious and displeased.

“If I have unwittingly brought you into a situation unfit for a young gentlewoman, my dear, I shall never forgive myself,” she said in great distress. “I am sure I acted for the best, as I thought——”

“My dear cousin,” said Althea, “I fear there is scarce a place to which we could have gone where we should not have been exposed to hear rebel sentiments.”

“I believe Quackenboss is there—I am sure I heard that poor misguided wretch say ‘Jacobus Quackenboss,’” pursued the old lady, knitting her brows. “If Quackenboss has turned rebel——”

But at this moment Captain Ward came in, followed by a stolid and rather sheepish-looking individual, who seemed to come against his will.

“Oh, Mr. Quackenboss!” exclaimed Mrs. Maverick on

seeing this latter person; "I daresay you're surprised to see me, but I had no means of sending you word as I was coming. I hope, however, you've no objections to this young lady and me spending the summer at the farm, as we used to do in my poor husband's time."

"Well; no; I s'pose you can come. But things ain't ready," said Quackenboss slowly.

"The waggin's here handy," put in Captain Ward, cutting short any further demur on Jacob's part; "and the landlady'll lend you a couple of cheers, and you'll get in nicely afore dark—the road not being very bad."

The Captain assisted in hoisting the ladies up into the wagon—a work of some difficulty in Mrs. Maverick's case, as she declared she could not and would not go up a ladder, which the ostler had brought from the loft for her convenience. However, she was safely landed at last, and she and Althea were comfortably settled in two broad-bottomed, splay-legged elbow-chairs, on either of which the most ponderous of the old Dutch Governors of New York might have sat down without a misgiving. The Captain shot up over the tail of the wagon, as though it had been a ship's side, to shake Miss Digby by the hand, made his bow to Mrs. Maverick, wished them a safe voyage and a joyful coming into port, and disappeared—while Jacobus took command of the horses from a turned-up cask in the front of the wagon.

Mrs. Maverick, who had expressed her thanks to the Captain, was graciously pleased to wave her hand to him, when, some ten minutes after (Jacobus having by that time got as much as fifty yards from the ferry), they saw him still standing at the inn door.

"I'm sure I don't know what we should have done without him," she observed. "Did he say what he was doing here, my dear Althea?"

Althea replied that, from a word or two he had dropped, she fancied he was watching the coast. As this could only mean that he was watching it in the rebel interest, Mrs. Maverick sighed.

"The Bible says rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft," she said presently. "And I'm sure 'tis as mysterious in the way it spreads, and the people it gets hold of."

Althea said nothing. The ride was a very silent one. Jacobus answered Mrs. Maverick's civil inquiries by mono-

syllables, or by the very briefest of sentences—the fewness of the words being, however, somewhat eked out by the slowness with which they were uttered. Jacobus was every inch a Dutchman. Square and solid, slow and sure, he diffused around him a sense of industrious leisure, which he appeared to have communicated to the great white horses which drew the two-spanner. In person he was capacious—as were his nether garments. His hair was still of a bright chestnut colour, so bright and thick that it might have been a wig,—but Jacobus would have scorned any such attempt to improve upon nature. His eyes were very small; and though it could not be said that they never looked one in the face, they seldom willingly dwelt long on a human countenance. When Jacobus was engaged in conversation with any one (it would be more correct to say, when any one was engaged in conversation with Jacobus), he usually became deeply interested in some object in a far corner of the room or in the extreme distance of the landscape, occasionally shooting a glance to see if the enemy was still there. But this afternoon his presence was soothing. After nine months spent in a besieged town, with scarcely a day unbroken by the roar of cannon, the quiet of a country road, the sleepy turn of the wheels, the budding green of the young trees, all brought a delightful restfulness to the travellers.

“Surely, dear cousin, we have exchanged war for peace,” said Althea, laying her hand on Mrs. Maverick’s, with an irrepressible yearning for sympathy. And Mrs. Maverick replied, “God grant, dear child, that we have!”

And so they rumbled along towards Flatbush, in the lingering March sunset—which always looks like a smile shining before the tears are dry.

* * * * *

The old Dutch farmhouse before which Jacobus Quackenboss brought his waggon to a halt, just as one or two pale-eyed stars showed in the fading saffron of the sky, looked the fitting goal of their journey. “Here is peace,” said the closed windows, the neatly-kept flower-border under the house, the solemn old white-oak which stood in such neighbourly nearness to the sloping eave—even the old dog who came out stretching and yawning, with a bark or two out of pure formality—everything spoke of settled ways, of ease and quietness.

“Fetch out the steps. I’ve got Mrs. Maverick,” said Jacobus to a gray-haired man and a raw-boned youth, who

came from the back of the house at the sound of the wagon-wheels. "Yonichy! Yonichy! Come out, Yonichy!"

A short stout woman in a close-fitting cap appeared at the door, shading a candle with her hand.

"Come out, Yonichy; I've got Mrs. Maverick," repeated Jacob.

"Good lack!" exclaimed the woman, coming out. "How do you do, Ma'am? Dear, dear, if I had but a-known——"

"It was impossible, my good Mrs. Quackenboss," said Mrs. Maverick, breathless with the exertion of descending from her rustic chariot. "You know you are always as clean as a new pin, and that's enough for me." To which Mrs. Quackenboss only repeated, "Dear, dear, if I'd a-known——"

Here her eye fell on Miss Digby, and she stared at that young lady in a fresh access of surprise and discomfiture.

"That's a friend of Mrs. Maverick's; she's come too," observed Jacobus, seeing his spouse's perplexity.

"This is my niece—that is, she is really a young cousin of mine," interposed Mrs. Maverick—while Althea won her future hostess's heart at once, by protesting she did not come to give any trouble, and hoped Mrs. Quackenboss would not put herself to any on her account, to which Mrs. Maverick added that for that night at least they must and would sit in the kitchen—and marched in with no more ado.

If the outside of the house was as plain as a barn, the inside was adorned with a cleanliness that many a palace cannot show. The fire in the huge open chimney glowed with fragrant pine-logs, and kindled itself anew in every dish-cover, saucepan, candlestick, and frying-pan. It gleamed on the rows of big-paunched jugs which hung from the brass hooks of the dresser; and it tipped each individual hook with a living diamond. The sanded floor, the polished chairs, the table set out for supper, all seemed hospitably to say,—“Pray, step in!” while a cheerful old Dutch clock ticked away close to the ceiling, like a gigantic cricket.

Mrs. Quackenboss, with fresh laments at not having known, made her unexpected guests sit by the fire, while she retired into a second kitchen, behind the “house-place,” where the actual work was done, to make some hasty additions to the meal.

A very square-faced little girl of perhaps eight years old, presently made her appearance, and—ignoring all the advances of Mrs. Maverick and Althea—went up to her father (who stood

with his back three-quarters turned to his guests), and possessing herself of the tail of his coat, appeared to be awaiting her execution with imperturbable resignation. As for Jacobus, in not going to see his horses put up, he was paying Mrs. Maverick the highest compliment he could have paid to any one, were it King George himself.

"Make your manners to the ladies, 'Tilda," he said in a low voice, "an' let my coat-tail be." Matilda on this turned her own back outright, and appeared to be sucking her thumb—as affording some slight moral support in so unprecedented a trial as the presence of two strange ladies.

"Matilda is very much grown, Mr. Quackenboss," said Mrs. Maverick, wishing to put an end to this embarrassing situation. "Why, bless me! what have you done with your clock-weight?"

For as the good lady's eyes rested on Matilda's straw-coloured head, they caught sight just beyond it of a large stone attached to the chain, in lieu of a weight.

Quackenboss faced round, looked a moment at Mrs. Maverick, and then earnestly contemplated a side of bacon which hung from a beam, as he replied stolidly,—

"It was took for lead."

"For lead?" asked Mrs. Maverick, not realising his meaning for the moment. "Lead for bullets," explained Jacobus, his eye resting still on the bacon. "Bullets for shootin'."

"Shooting snipes and wild fowl, I suppose?" observed Mrs. Maverick, refusing to admit a horrid suspicion.

"Snipes—or Tories, as the case might be," said Jacobus, with true Dutch phlegm, yet evidently uttering the words on compulsion.

"Good heavens! Mr. Quackenboss!" exclaimed Mrs. Maverick, turning as red as the copper saucepan which was at this instant engaging her tenant's attention. "Do you mean to tell me you allowed the rebels to carry off your clock-weights, to make bullets of to shoot His Majesty's loyal subjects with?"

"Well," said Jacobus slowly, shifting his gaze to the frying-pan; "I'm afeared that's about what 'twas they took 'em for, for 'twas Colonel Heard as took 'em, and finely I've been plagued about it ever since—though I ain't the only one, not by a long chalk, as had their weights took—and their guns too, for that matter."

"And did you not resist?"

"There was too many on 'em," said Jacobus. "When there's a Colonel a-talkin' fire an' brimstone, an' a file o' minute-men a-lookin' tar an' feathers, an' your wife a-cryin'——"

The unusual effort of uttering so many words at once here proved too much. Jacobus suddenly relapsed into silence, until his better-half came in, in a procession of two—the other member being old Nan, the cook, who grinned on seeing Mrs. Maverick, and looked at Miss Digby with undisguised admiration.

"Sit by, sit by," exclaimed Jacobus, as hastily as he was ever known to say anything, the instant old Nan had deposited her smoking plate of buckwheat cakes on the table. He stood while his guests seated themselves, lifted Matilda to a high stool, and then sitting down himself, clasped his hands, threw his head on one side, and shut his eyes, and so sat silent by the space of a full minute, as was the Dutch manner of saying grace. And whimsical as was the figure he cut, both Mrs. Maverick and Althea, while they also gravely bowed their heads, felt their hearts moved to sincere thankfulness to the Goodness which had guided them to this haven of repose.

But repose is of brief duration here below, and Mrs. Maverick was kept awake half the night by the distressing consideration that, as she might say—being the Lady of the Manor—her own clock-weights had been converted into rebel bullets, and that possibly some of His Majesty's faithful subjects had by this time received grievous bodily harm from these identical missiles!

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE OLD BELL OF INDEPENDENCE.

The men are ripe of Saxon kind
To build an equal State.

THERE were many anxious and excited groups of people waiting round the State House in Philadelphia, on a certain July morning. As many as could, stood in the shade of the black walnuts, which were already shady trees when William Penn began to build his city by the broad waters of the Delaware.

The people were watching the windows of the State House. It was broad day—a summer's day, and there was no candle

in any window like that which, but two years before, burned in a window at Versailles, and whose sudden extinction was to be the sign that the King was dead; but these people here were none the less waiting for the last hour of a King's reign to strike.

Jasper Fleming, with his cousin Mary on his arm, had been waiting here more than an hour. Every now and then the crowd opened to let some one pass into the State House, and as often as this happened, a low murmur would go round, as each man told his neighbour who it was.

Across the street, in the yard of Clarke's Inn, stood half-a-dozen chaises with the horses taken out, and the innkeeper himself was—as could be seen from his gestures—rating the ostler for not sweeping up some of the oyster-shells which plentifully strewed his yard, and made it look like that of a marine tavern. The old inn, with its rough weather-boarding, gave that part of the street a still more out-of-town aspect than it would otherwise have had; but no one looked at the inn—all eyes were turned towards the door of the State House.

Every one knew that Pennsylvania and Maryland had been against the Declaration of Independence, and many were the reports afloat as to the numbers for and against. Some said that Cæsar Rodney, the third delegate for Delaware, had been sent for in haste, and that he had given his vote in favour of the Declaration—whereupon the Pennsylvanian representatives had wavered. Others said that Pennsylvania and Delaware still held out. But these were mere flying rumours, set on foot one hour to be contradicted the next. What was certain was, that the Great Decision hung trembling in the balance—the Great Decision which would turn revolt into revolution, and transform mere plantations and colonies into a Nation. That this *was* a Great Decision, every one there present was well aware—if no one there knew how great, what wonder? The issues of that day, with all that they have involved and will yet involve in the world's story, are unmeasured still.

In the yard at the back of the State House there was a small round platform, which Rittenhouse had made for the purpose of observing the transit of Venus, seven years ago. "That was a famous day at Norriton," said a mild-eyed elderly man with a pair of heavy-rimmed silver spectacles, and dressed in a decent suit of duffle-gray. "We had all been watching the clouds for a week before, for fear the sky shouldn't be clear. Mr. Ritten-

house hadn't slept for nights and nights—leastways he looked as if he hadn't; and when the time came, and the planet showed fair out on the sun's face, he just dropped down all of a heap in a dead faint—I saw him drop." Here the speaker looked round, and nodded his head impressively, as much as to say,— "Mark how much he took the matter to heart, and learn hence what it is to be an astronomer!" "But he came to in a minute or so, and went on with his observations," he continued, when he had given his hearers time to digest this impressive fact. "They say there's not a better astronomer to be found anywhere—not all over Europe, nor England neither; and his orrery's the best as ever was made, and 'tis a great shame to us we haven't gotten it here in Philadelphia."

"My memory goes back further nor yourn, Mr. School-master—a vasty deal further back," quavered a very aged man, small and shrivelled, who was sitting in the shade, on a chair which a woman had brought out for him. "I remember when this fair-built town was a little lot o' cabins in the wilderness—lodges in a garden o' cowcumpers, as you might say. I've seen Injuns' wigwams, where now there's stores an' meetin'-houses, an' red men paddlin' their canoes, where now there's wharves with merchantmen a-layin' alongside. I mind pickin' blackberries an' catchin' wild conies where now there's streets. I can remember William Penn—I could show you the very place where his cabin stood; it warn't much like the Slate-Roof House, I reckon," said the old man, with a feeble cackling laugh. "Rome warn't built in a day, they say—no more warn't Philadelphia; but I mind the buildin' o' most part on't."

"Ay, that you do, Master Drinker," said the woman who had brought out the chair. "I've hearn my father say as you an' the city was pretty nigh the same age."

"Pretty nigh, pretty nigh," said the old man in his high thin voice. "I can look back more'n eighty years. Eighty years is a long time in a man's life; but in the life of a city it counts for but a few days. I'm an old man, but this is a young city—young an' fair, young an' fair; and I bless the Lord for lettin' me see this day before I depart in peace."

"How much has happened in those eighty years, Jasper!" said Mary, as they moved a little nearer the platform. "It is impossible to imagine that as much can happen in the next eighty."

"Do you think history's tale is done?" said Jasper, smiling.

"A whole new page is going to be unrolled to-day, and all we who stand here shall have to write some of its lines." As he spoke, the great bell began to ring above their heads.

"Now, thank God!" he exclaimed, gripping Mary's hand tighter—"they have agreed to the Declaration!"

The quick joyful strokes smote on the air; the summer day seemed to have suddenly found a tongue. Old Ned Drinker stood up and waved his hat, and most of the people cheered—though some of the groups drew back a little, as if alike reluctant to go or to stay. A substantial-looking citizen, whose garb showed him to be a Quaker—and whose fresh-coloured impassive face was a singular contrast to many of the eager countenance around him—said to Jasper, "I perceive, friend, that thee rejoices; but has thee sat down and counted the cost, whether thee is able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against thee with twenty thousand? Moreover, has thee considered that these Colonies can no more flourish cut off from Great Britain, than a limb can live after it is cut off from the body, or a branch after it is torn from the tree?"

"But we can take a slip and plant it, and it can grow to a greater tree than its parent," replied Jasper. There was a murmur of assent from those who heard his answer, and a group of listeners collected round the disputants as the Quaker asked, loud enough for everybody to hear,— "What are we, left to ourselves? This very bell, set a-ringing to announce your rash defiance, was fetched hither from England——"

"But it was recast here—and they say we taught it a sweeter tune than it had at first," retorted Jasper. His reply evoked a slight cheer. The Quaker, however, seemed in no wise silenced; but at that instant a thrill ran through the crowd—by that time very much increased—and every one said,—"They are coming out!"

There was a deep silence (except for the pealing of the great bell), as the members of Congress crowded out. Most of them stood on the steps and in the hall. A few went up with Colonel Nixon into the observatory. Many a well-known face was there, and among the foremost stood Samuel Adams, his gray head bared to the sun. He saw Jasper, and waved his hand to him with a gesture of triumph. There too was Dr. Witherspoon of Princeton, in whose veins ran the blood of John Knox—a whisper was already going round the crowd that his words had finally determined the hesitating delegates.

The generations which have inherited that day's deed have often shown much arrogance in their rejoicings over it; but those who actually bore a part in it were mostly too much in earnest for any vulgar bragging, and had too well counted the cost. Nixon's voice rang loud and clear—sound travelled far in Philadelphia, perhaps by some peculiarity of atmosphere—and a quarter of the listening city might have heard. All the civilised world has heard it since.

The first reading of that famous Declaration has been celebrated since then, in all parts of the habitable and uninhabitable globe. The sons and daughters of those rebellious colonists have kept that day with sober thankfulness, with rowdy merriment, with exultant pride, with solemn memories, from the forests of Maine to the swamps and jungles of Louisiana, and from the Atlantic to the Pacific Oceans. As that day comes round, it is remembered on the other side of the world—in nooks of the Alban Hills, in passes of the Appenines, among the Umbrian Mountains, and by the banks of Arno, in many a German town, in the heartless streets of Paris, and on ships tossing in mid-ocean, far from any land. Even amidst the eternal desolations of the north, in the brief Arctic summer, that day has been celebrated. On that day, every American, wherever he may be, thinks of home, and if he be in a far country, feels the pangs of homesickness. If it happen to him to keep that day in the mother-country, whose rule his ancestors cast off, he can perhaps afford after the lapse of a hundred years, to remember it with some abatement of the old bitterness, even though with no less of the old pride. There are wounds that ache for centuries—time itself but skins them over—and this is one. But after a hundred years, the inheritor of that day can perhaps afford to remember that his blood, his language, his religion, his stubborn independence itself, are all English—as he says devoutly, QUI TRANSTULIT SUSTINET.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE DUTY OF A CHRISTIAN MAN.

THE reading was over; the people huzzaed, and the Old Bell called all the other bells of the city to rejoice with him that another nation was born.

As Jasper and Mary turned to go—when a sort of solemn hush had fallen on the crowd—the Quaker, who had spoken before said reprovingly to Jasper,—

“Young man, thee looks as though thee had just gotten thy heart’s desire ; but for all that, remember that they that take the sword shall perish by the sword !”

“Say that to cowards, Master Roberts !” cried the school-master, pushing forward, his pale face glowing and quivering with excitement. “We ain’t afraid to die, if that’s all you’ve gotten to frighten us with ! And let me tell you, you’ll find you’ve run your head against a wall—or something worse perhaps—if you go about Philadelphia preaching submission to tyranny !”

“I think I am like to be in more danger of running my head against a wall, in resisting the power of Great Britain,” rejoined the Quaker. “King George hath a long arm, friend schoolmaster, and we are like to feel it. It is impossible this attempt at Independence can succeed—’tis sheer madness.”

“’Tis impossible we can fail—if we can only hold out long enough,” cried Jasper ; “and we can hold out long enough if we will but dare do it ! All we need is courage and patience. The King of England is stronger than we, I grant you ; but in this quarrel he will be as a man who is fighting at arm’s length—he can but touch us with the tips of his fingers.”

“We are not to resist evil, but to give place unto wrath,” said Roberts, shifting his ground.

“Yet the Lord Himself bade His disciples take a sword,” said Jasper. “We did not seek this quarrel—’twas forced upon us ; and for how many years have we not had patience ? As for perishing, we must all die once—and blest are they who die, like Joseph Warren, for their country !”

A deep hum went round the crowd at the mention of Warren’s name. Roberts flushed with some carnal wrath as he replied,—

“Thee speaks as a soldier and a man of blood, young man, and I fear art of those of whom it is written, ‘Cursed is the people that delight in war.’” As the Quaker said this he looked at Jasper’s uniform with evident disfavour.

“Nay—I am not a soldier save by sad necessity. I am a lawyer by profession, and, God knows, peaceably enough inclined by nature,” returned Jasper.

“If thee is a lawyer, friend, thee belongs to a trade which

has no place in the Kingdom of Heaven," returned Roberts. Several people standing by laughed.

"You would withdraw the Christian man from the commonwealth," said Jasper rather warmly. "We have tried all other means; there is nothing left now but the sword or slavery. The Christian man is a citizen, and must do his duty as a citizen. Our Independence hath been this day proclaimed. We are this day a nation. For that Independence we must, if needs be, even lay down our lives. Whoever here is not afraid to be a man, say with me, God preserve the united Colonies of North America!"

Jasper had addressed his brief speech to a little knot of people, whom his passage of arms with the Quaker had attracted to the spot. As he took off his hat at the last words, all the men, with the single exception of Roberts, followed his example, and the women cried "Amen!"

"I was very glad you said what you did, dear cousin," said Mary, as they went home. "I wish Noel could have heard you."

"I was obliged to speak, lest Roberts should daunt the people," he replied. "Philadelphia is not whole-hearted like Boston; there are many here who would compound if they could. But I think that after this there can be no drawing back."

Mrs. Branzholm and Mary had now been some time in Philadelphia. As the spring advanced, and it became evident that the blockade of Boston would soon be raised, and the theatre of war removed southwards, Colonel Branzholm (who was now a Brigadier-General, having been appointed in the early part of the winter) had resolved not to run the risk of leaving his family at Oglethorpe, exposed to any Indian rising which the disturbed state of the country might bring about. Nor were Indians the only danger. Party rancour had not yet reached the frightful virulence which it was soon to display, but already neighbours were arrayed against each other, and many a lifelong friendship had turned to bitter hatred. Mr. Butler of Fairmead had definitively taken his stand on the side of the British Government; and it was reported at Oglethorpe that his son had accepted a commission in a Corps of irregular cavalry being raised by the Tories of Virginia. The isolated position of Oglethorpe made its efficient defence very difficult, even in ordinary times of disturbance;

and General Branhholm had now additional and particular reason for anxiety, in the course taken by another branch of the Butler family. They were very distant relations of the Butlers of Fairmead, and the two branches had never been on cordial terms. This branch of the family had fiercely espoused the British side, and had already shown by actions as well as by words that they intended to disregard all considerations of kinship. Mr. Butler of Fairmead had highly disapproved of the intemperate spirit in which his cousins had taken their side, and had expressed himself in terms which had brought on him the taunt of being no better than a rebel at heart himself. Mr. Butler was by this time on very cool terms with his relations at Oglethorpe, but he had nevertheless sent a message to his sister to advise her to remove to safer quarters—and above all, not to reckon on the Butlers' forbearance should the war become general. With all these reasons for fear, it was an immense relief to General Branhholm to know that his wife was safely lodged in the Slate-Roof House, whither she had brought everything of value which could possibly be removed, and where she arrived in time to see General Washington when he visited the city in May. Oglethorpe was abandoned to the care of the General's white overseer, assisted by Nebuchadnezzar—on whose shoulders (in his own opinion) rested the chief weight of government. And certainly, if multiplicity of orders constitute government, Nebuchadnezzar ruled Oglethorpe. His very aspect was changed—a portentous solemnity invested his features, and he was on one occasion heard to remark that the "sponsability was a'most too much for one back to bear up under," and that he felt "like as if he was car'yin' a mountain." He would doubtless have likened himself to Atlas, had he ever heard of that over-burdened immortal. Uncle Memnon with his futile reminiscences of my Lord Baltimore was nowhere—Nebuchadnezzar crushed him with a shake of his care-laden brow. Was Lord Baltimore himself ever in such a responsible situation as I am? he seemed to ask with sorrowful triumph, and Uncle Memnon was fain to confine his reminiscences to an audience of an age too tender to discriminate clearly between great and small.

Mary remained with her aunt, even after Boston was evacuated. The journey was long, and the country much disturbed, and it seemed better to leave her where she was in safety—especially as for many months after the evacuation

there were frequent rumours of an intended attack on Boston by sea.

Mrs. Fleming supported her daughter's absence with characteristic resignation—further assisted by the conviction that Providence was thus preparing the realisation of her favourite plan. Ever since the untimely death of her own son, the good lady had cherished the hope that Jasper would take that son's place. He had somewhat disappointed this hope, inasmuch as he had applied himself to the law, instead of becoming a ship-builder and owner like his father and uncle. But at that time it was not impossible to combine several callings. Jasper had on many occasions shown considerable mechanical ability, and had suggested one or two material improvements in the stowage of cargoes, and even in some of the details of shipbuilding; and Mrs. Fleming kept the hope in a corner of her heart that he would yet take to business—for she had moments when the certainty of his being one of the chief merchants of Boston seemed to her more desirable than the possibility of his attaining to the honours of a judgeship. In either case, however, Jasper was evidently the husband appointed for Mary in the decrees of Heaven. Mrs. Fleming was one of those timid but tenacious women who are jealous of strangers. She had herself married her cousin, and she made a clannish distinction between her own family and the rest of the world. It seemed to her that there was safety in Mary's marrying Jasper. It is true his views on all subjects were on a scale so much larger than her own, that she had never even succeeded in grasping them; but his moral character was irreproachable, his fortune was ample—and, above all, he was of her own flesh and blood.

This being the case, Mrs. Fleming easily persuaded her husband that the journey was dangerous, and that Philadelphia was far safer than Boston, and Mary had better remain there.

Jasper (whose company was ordered to New York the day after the evacuation) concurred in his aunt's view, being tolerably certain that both his mother and Mary would thank him for doing so. Jasper had long ago seen through poor Mrs. Fleming's transparent devices for bringing him and Mary together, and he had his private reasons for thinking that no harm would result from them to either party. He departed therefore, charged with a bulky packet of letters, and with multitudinous messages, which he was to deliver as soon as his duties would permit him to ask for a few days' leave of absence.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

A PAINTED ROSE.

"Absence is vain, for everything
Which I have known belong to you,
Your form does to my fancy bring,
And makes my old wounds bleed anew."

JASPER FLEMING's services at Bunker's Hill were not forgotten, and very soon after his arrival at New York he received a Colonel's commission in the artillery.

He immediately found a safe hand by which to send the letters ; but the messages had to wait until early in July he was able to go himself to Philadelphia. He accomplished this journey on horseback, accompanied by his negro servant, Telemachus—the same lad who opened Mr. Fleming's door to Noel Branhholm on the night of his return from England. Telemachus was a native of Oglethorpe, and had been presented to Jasper some years before by Colonel Branhholm. Somewhat to the surprise of his friends, Jasper had freed him ; but Telemachus was so devoted to his master that this made no visible difference in their relations, and those who prophesied that Jasper would "spoil a good nigger," saw their predictions disappointed.

Jasper found his mother established in the Slate-Roof House at the corner of Second Street, then one of the best boarding-houses in the town, and where several members of Congress (including Mr. John Adams himself) were lodged. She had brought a couple of servants with her, and lived as much as possible in the Virginian way—somewhat to the scandal of the strictest Philadelphians, who had never seen a person so entirely content to do nothing at all. Like many idle persons, however, Mrs. Branhholm could exert herself on occasion ; and she did so notably at her first arrival, insisting on having a particular room as her sitting-room, and giving further offence by changing the position of the furniture. "Every one else had thought the furniture was set where it should be," murmured the insulted landlady of the Slate-Roof House. "Mrs. Adams had said it was set up real elegant. But Madam Branhholm seemed to think what did for other people wouldn't do for her." However, no one could long resist Madam Branhholm—she had her way, and the walnut press was removed to behind the door,

and the sofa put in its place. Madam Branhholm was reclining on this very sofa, when Jasper and Mary returned.

"Tell me all about it!" she exclaimed, springing up as they entered. "I heard the bells ring, and was sorry I did not go with you; but I did not believe they would agree for days yet."

"They have agreed, dear mother," said Jasper, sitting down beside her, and kissing her fondly. "I wish you had been there—it was all quiet enough."

"You don't think I was afraid, I hope, Jasper!" cried Mrs. Branhholm, with briskness enough to have taken her to the State House. "I was lazy, and I thought there would be nothing to see, and it was a hot day—but I was not afraid!"

"I never saw you afraid yet, mother," said Jasper, putting his arm round her waist in lover-like fashion, as he added maliciously, "It may be that you are only too lazy to run away."

Jasper had not gone far in his account of the morning, before Mary interrupted him, protesting that he was leaving out his own part. "You ought to have been there, Aunt, to have heard him reply to Mr. Roberts, who was all for pouring cold water on the Declaration," she said. "And he made a speech that you would have been proud to hear."

As Mary said this, her eyes sought Jasper's with sisterly admiration, and her cheeks glowed brightly—he thought she had grown handsomer than ever.

While Mary was descanting on Jasper's oratory, he had time to glance round the room. It had from the first oddly recalled to him Mrs. Maverick's sitting-room in Boston, but he did not know what it was that had touched the hidden springs of memory, until his mother said,—“You are looking at those pretty painted fans. Are they not sweetly done? Althea Digby copied them from a pair Mrs. Maverick had, and I happened to say I had always admired them, and nothing would do but the dear girl must make me accept of them. Fetch them here, Mary, my love; I want Jasper to see them closer.”

Mary brought the fans. They were painted very delicately with fuchsias and roses, in the stiffly graceful fashion of a hundred years ago.

“Are they not sweetly painted?” repeated his mother. “Take them in your own hand, Jasper; they bear looking into.”

As Jasper took the screens from Mary, and examined them, he knew that her clear eyes were reading him, and was con-

scious of looking rather foolish, even amidst the pang which he always now felt at hearing Althea's name.

"They are very beautifully done," he said gravely. "When did she give them to you, mother?" He had a ridiculous difficulty in fixing his attention on the painted flowers—Althea's face would come floating between him and her handiwork.

"At Oglethorpe," replied Mrs. Branzholm. "She is a delightful creature! I call her quite one's idea of a heroine. Her brother is a fine young fellow in his way, but not a patch on his sister. Do but look at the fuchsias again, Jasper; they always remind me of the way she droops her own head, when she is in one of her softer moods. Don't you think so?"

"I rarely had the advantage of seeing Miss Digby in one of her softer moods," said Jasper drily—but he changed colour a little as he spoke.

"You ungrateful wretch!" cried his mother; "I protest, I shall have to box your ears! Did she not nurse you when you was wounded? Oh, my poor dear boy, what would I not have given to be there myself!" she said, tenderly stroking his cheek. "Your cheek burns—you are feverish," she exclaimed hastily. "You must have one of my fever draughts at once! Riding for days in the sun, as you have——"

She would have sprung up to fetch it, but Jasper gently but firmly detained her.

"My dear mother," he said, "I am perfectly well, and if the decoction you propose to give me is the one I imagine it to be, its nastiness so infinitely surpasses all its other qualities, that now I am come to years of discretion, and am a Colonel of artillery, I am resolved to swallow no more of it."

Mary laughed, but Mrs. Branzholm with perfect good faith replied that medicine which had any strength in it was inevitably nasty.

"If that be so, dearest mother, your potion must have been originally mixed for a sick elephant; at any rate I'll have none of it," replied Jasper; at which even his mother was obliged to laugh, and say he was always an obstinate boy, and she must give him up. Then she returned to the subject of Althea, and would have Jasper tell her over again the story of his captivity.

"Poor Noel! I am sure he will envy you for having been nursed by Althea," she said, playing with one of the fans which she had taken out of Jasper's hand—he had forgotten to lay it down. "Between you and me, Jasper, Noel is mightily

smitten with her—and, upon my word, I don't wonder at it. I never could be quite sure whether she returned it or no; I watched her sharp enough too, but she fairly puzzled me. She has an uncommon interest in him, 'tis evident; but whether 'tis of that particular kind is another matter—and, to be sure, Noel saved Lieutenant Digby's life. Finely his father scolded him for his rashness; but 'twas a most gallant affair, and Meshach Pike, when he came to hear about it, said Noel behaved like an old general."

"Digby has often described it to me," said Jasper. "Digby thinks the world of Noel, and is always lamenting that they cannot fight side by side. When we heard the first rumours that General Arnold had failed, he came to me with the tears in his eyes, to ask me if I had any secret news—he knew I got some sometimes—and when I told him I'd been assured Noel was not among the slain, his joy would have won my heart for ever, if I had not loved him already. He is as free from guile or self-seeking as Noel himself. Would to God the dear boy were safe back again! I lie awake of nights imagining all sorts of things, and so, I doubt not, mother, do you!"

"I could not endure it, was I at Oglethorpe," cried Mrs. Branzholm. "Here, with so many other wives and mothers in a like situation, and with Mary to cheer me when I'm dull, 'tis more tolerable. But I must have your opinion of Noel and Althea. What do you think, Jasper? you had opportunity of observing her."

"I think she detests me as the instrument whereby (as she pleases herself to think) Noel was persuaded to rebellion," said Jasper, steadily meeting Mary's eye. "She is too generous not to be kind to a vanquished enemy—she called me so one day—but in her heart she accuses me of having decoyed him from his loyalty, and she likes him well enough to owe me a grudge for it."

If Jasper had wished to punish Mary for having noted his embarrassment he had his revenge; her own eyes fell before his, and her cheeks grew a little pale.

"I told you so, Mary! You would always have it that she only felt for him as a sister might for a brother; but you hear what Jasper says!"

"All I know is, she as good as told me at Oglethorpe that she had no other but sisterly regard for him," said Mary, reddening again

Now Jasper knew the history of that day perfectly—having had it from his mother in a letter, for which he paid treble postage. He remembered with singular distinctness that Althea on that memorable occasion had bestowed an embrace, sisterly or otherwise, on Noel; and he privately inclined to the belief that her speech about sisterly affection meant no more than that she could never receive the addresses of a rebel. He was aroused from these reflections by his mother playfully shaking him, and declaring that she had asked him a question three times over.

"I beg your pardon, mother; you set me thinking, and I went off in a brown study, as you used to call it when we were boys," he said, trying to give a jesting turn to the conversation. "What is the question?"

"I have been asking you three times what you think of her yourself?"

"Of Miss Digby?"

"Of course; you know very well we have been talking of no one else."

"That is a difficult question to answer in a moment," he replied, feeling the old embarrassment come over him. He nervously took up the other fan and seemed to be counting the thorns on the rose as he said, hesitating between each word,—
"I think her beautiful—and accomplished——"

"And high-minded," cried his mother. "Surely you think her high-minded?"

"And high-minded," said Jasper, in the same slow quiet tone. "And so proud, that she would, I fear, sacrifice another's happiness—and perhaps her own—to that pride."

"You are right there, Jasper," said Mary. "Or, at least, 'twould be a hard struggle. Yet I love her dearly; and if she would but let her heart speak, what a heart it would be!"

"She'll come round—she must," exclaimed Mrs. Branholt cheerfully. "We shall have peace at last—Captain Digby will come into his uncle's fortune, and all will be well in the end. But when will you get a sweetheart for yourself, dear boy? For my part, I'm not one of those mothers that hate their sons should marry. I've fancied sometimes—if you was to keep anything from me, Jasper—any grief, I mean—'twould cut me to the heart! I've fancied——"

"Dearest mother, you are all the sweetheart I ever had, be assured of that," said Jasper—smiling at her, as the Spartan

boy smiled while the fox tore him. He found it difficult to meet Mary's eye without wincing, but he dissembled admirably with his mother. "There can be little thought of love or marriage for many a day to come, for me," he said, with forced cheerfulness. "When, as you say, all has come right in the end, it will be time enough. Meanwhile my mother is all womankind to me."

At which Mrs. Branzholm melted into tears, and declared that no mother ever had such loving sons, and protested she was a useless wretch and did not deserve their devotion.

Mary went away and left them together. She stood a long time at her own window, idly listening to the footsteps that passed below.

"I do not believe she loves him; there was sincerity in her voice that night if ever I heard it," she said to herself. "But, after all, what is it to me whether she does or no? Unless, indeed, that I should be grieved if she should ever make Noel unhappy; though, if I'm not much mistaken, she has made some one else unhappy already."

Mary's suspicion as to this was confirmed next day, when—happening to pass the door of the sitting-room on her way downstairs—she saw, through the crack of the hinge, Jasper standing by the mantel-shelf, attentively looking at Althea's fans. At that instant he took one of them into his hands, with as much care as if it had been a living thing, contemplated it a while—it was the one with the rose—and then, unless Mary's ears deceived her, sighed deeply as he restored it to its place.

CHAPTER XXXV.

HOUSEHOLDS DIVIDED.

A DAY or two after this, Jasper rode away, with Telemachus behind him—turning many times to wave his hat once more to the ladies, who stood in the porch watching him out of sight. He was going back to New York—to find the British Fleet at Staten Island, and Admiral Howe making one more last attempt to bring about a reconciliation.

The brief period of rejoicing, which followed the Declaration of Independence, lasted but just long enough for King George's statues to be made into bullets; before these bullets could be

shot into the bodies of His Majesty's soldiers, Fortune began to turn her wheel.

Sir Peter Parker's fleet had come up from the South, with Lord Dunmore and his refugees of all colours—and with Mr. Butler of Fairmead, whose son it was now said was raising a company to serve under De Lancey, and whose two daughters had been for some time in New York.

People were talking, too, about Dr. Church, who in this same month of July had begged and received permission to go to the Bermudas, on the plea that his health was suffering from his imprisonment. No one doubted his guilt, but that plausible tongue and ready pen, which had wagged on both sides so long, stood him in good stead in his treason; he managed to cast a mist of words about his deeds in such fashion that it was hard to mark precisely the measure of his guilt. He set sail, but the ship that carried him was never heard of again,—and so he vanishes with his dishonour out of history.

Mr. Butler had professed himself highly incensed at finding his daughters detained, as he chose to call it, and had written an angry letter to General Branzholm, whose brigade had for a short time occupied the city. The General replied that the young ladies certainly were detained, and added that he had taken it upon himself to detain them, rather than allow them to be exposed to the risks of leaving the city before he had heard from their father. Many of the inhabitants, Whigs as well as Tories, had removed into the country, as soon as New York became the centre of attack; and already marauders were profiting by the general disturbance.

This explanation by no means appeased Mr. Butler, and he sent back so curt a letter that General Branzholm requested Jasper Fleming to take the girls across the ferry to Staten Island, where their father would meet them.

"I don't want to quarrel with him more than I can help, for your mother's sake," he said, as he gave Jasper the pass. "If I see him, we shall both of us say what we shall be sorry for afterwards."

The girls had been the guests of Mr. Thomas Smith, who had now given up his house to Major-General Gates, and who had offered to take the young ladies with him to Haverstraw on the Hudson, where his brother the Counsellor also had a house. But Mr. Butler had, in an angry letter to his brother-in-law, peremptorily declined to allow his daughters to be sheltered

longer by a rebel—an uncivil expression which Jasper persuaded General Branzholm to soften down in the conveying of it to Mr. Smith.

The girls themselves—two dark-eyed, romantic damsels of fifteen and sixteen or so—openly regretted their father's decision, and the younger declared it was a shame—it would have been delightful to go to Haverstraw.

As Jasper got into the coach after his cousins, he unbuckled his sword and laid it across his knees, to their no small admiration; and Myra (who was named after Jasper's mother) exclaimed, "What a pity, Cousin Jasper, you aint on the King's side!"

As they went down to the ferry, after alighting from the coach, a score or two of the Connecticut Light Horse passed them. Some Marylanders who were lounging outside a guard-house, strolled into the middle of the road, and began to banter them. The girls laughed, and Jasper himself could not quite retain his gravity. The Connecticut men were a motley rout, attired in every variety of antiquated raiment. Some were rigged out in uniforms which by their venerable appearance might have first seen war at the siege of Louisburg. Some still wore their yeoman's dress of rustic homespun, with jack-boots and an enormous leathern belt added thereto—in which garb they bore a whimsical resemblance to a company of Ironsides on their way to smite the malignants.

In ludicrous contrast to these Puritanic worthies, were a few warriors in full-bottomed wigs, whose solemn dignity but ill-accored with the rest of their wearers' equipment. Here and there—and perhaps these presented the oddest appearance of all—might be seen a pair of stalwart shoulders encased in dingy regulation scarlet, surmounted by a weather-beaten countenance, shaded by a three-cornered laced hat, wofully battered and tarnished. The horses were worthy of their riders, but certainly did not merit the name of "light horse." Many of them were sorry jades, and more than one of the best of them had probably in peaceful times drawn the plough of the modern Cincinnatus who now rode him to battle.

Jasper's cousins giggled audibly at the sight of this martial cavalcade—for martial it was, despite the many ludicrous incongruities of its appointments. The smart Marylanders, in their scarlet and buff uniforms, all trim and new, could not resist the opportunity of displaying their wit. A gay young lieutenant had just requested the loan of a redoubtable fowling-piece, carried

by a grim old yeoman, who was mounted on an extraordinary raw-boned animal. "Prithee, lend us your blunderbuss, good Master Accepted," said this young scapegrace, with a sly wink to his friends. "'Tis the very moral of one my grandfather used to shoot ducks with, away to Pennsylvania, when I was a boy. The sight of that venerable weapon, sir, excites in my bosom the holiest associations——"

"My name is not Accepted," returned the Connecticut man, "and as for holiness, young sir, I reckon you have about as little of it as my musket."

There was a laugh at this; but the Marylander returned to the charge. "If your name aint Accepted, I'll wager 'tis Makepeace," he said impudently.

"Nay, Hopestill—he hopeth for a better nag than the jade he rideth," suggested another, imitating the Connecticut drawl; while the smart young lieutenant who had spoken before, begged to know if he happened to come from Windham—protesting that he had always had a great desire to learn from a native of that town a particular account of the talking frogs, which had once put the place in such a taking.

A laborious research into Dr. Peters's admirable work on Connecticut has failed to reveal wherein lay the sting of this apparently innocent question. It acted, however, as a casual reference to the moon is said to do to an inhabitant of Gotham. By way of reply, the Connecticut man smote the Marylander with the stock of the ancient matchlock he had just derided, and others joining in, a serious fray was threatened.

This, however, Jasper did not see. By this time, he and the girls had got down to the ferry stairs, where their trunks were already being put aboard the boat. Colonel Fleming showed his pass to an officer of the guards, and the ferryman put off.

"You may laugh at their coats," said Jasper, as his cousins made merry at the expense of the Connecticut men, and asked each other what their father would say to such a regiment? "but when such men as they turn soldiers, it means that our cause must win at last—and you can tell your father I said so."

Mr. Butler, who looked older and sterner, was waiting with a coach at the landing.

"So my brother-in-law has thought it best to send me my children," he said. "Now I've got 'em safe, I'll let him know what I think of him. I saw through his manœuvre; he would have kept 'em as hostages."

He persisted in this charge, in spite of all that Jasper could say, and bitterly reproached his nephew for having seduced Noel.

"You flatter me, Uncle—I am happy to know that my brother needed no one to show him on which side the right lay," said Jasper with some warmth.

"Don't Uncle me, sir!" cried Mr. Butler in a rage. "You provoke me to forget you're my nephew!"

"You shall not provoke me to forget that you are my mother's brother, sir," answered Jasper quietly. At the moment there was a look on his face which reminded Mr. Butler of his father—between whom and himself there had been very little love lost.

"It is useless to prolong our interview, sir," continued Jasper. "I am sorry you did not let my cousins go with Mr. Smith to Haverstraw, where they would have been safer than they can be here. As for the other question, you have made your choice and I have made mine, and I do not think either of us is very likely to change our minds."

The girls kissed Jasper, regardless of their father's frown; but uncle and nephew parted without even a clasp of the hand.

This specimen of the rancour excited by the troubles of the times made Jasper forget all about the encounter of wits between Connecticut and Maryland. He had recrossed the ferry, and had got nearly as far as the guard-house, when he perceived a crowd of soldiers and civilians—in the midst of whom he instantly recognised the tall figure of General Washington himself. His Excellency was giving vent to one of those rare outbursts of passions, which his usual self-command made all the more terrible.

"Good God! gentlemen," he was exclaiming—while his blue eyes fairly blazed with anger—"if your notion of the way to defend your country is to break each other's heads, you will save the enemy a deal of trouble, and I had better throw up my command! This is not the first time I have been revolted, by the disgusting spectacle of men who profess to be united in one great and sacred cause, allowing their petty jealousies of each other to interfere with their duty to their country! Let me see it no more!"

Most of those assembled looked sheepish; several of them showed by their disordered dress that there had been an encounter of more than wits; and the smart young lieutenant

furtively wiped away some blood which was trickling down the side of his face. The action did not escape His Excellency.

"The next time you shed your blood, sir," he said sternly, "let it be in a cause for which you need not blush." Then his eye fell on Jasper. "A word with you, Colonel Fleming," he said; and as they went away together, he began to complain passionately of the ill-feeling between State and State which made his task yet more difficult.

"To bring such different tempers into harmony is a harder task than Noah had to keep the peace in the ark," he ended; "and our enemies know it, and lay their account on it!"

CHAPTER XXXVI.

MRS. MAVERICK FINDS HERSELF IN A LOYAL NEIGHBOURHOOD.

You've raised the storm
Will sever us for ever.

ISABELLA, OR THE FATAL MARRIAGE.

AT first, though even at Flatbush there was much to grieve a loyal soul, Mrs. Maverick congratulated herself on the step she had taken. They were not free, even at Flatbush, from alarms and marchings—every now and then Althea would start out of her sleep to hear the tramp of a body of minute-men, marching past from Brooklyn or New Utrecht. Once, the house was searched for weapons, by a person whose only pretensions to a uniform were a cockade and a swagger. Mrs. Maverick fixed her eyes upon him, and regarded him with steady contempt all the while he was in her presence, and only refrained from calling him a rebel to his face, because she felt herself answerable for Althea. As for herself, she would have liked nothing better than to be clapped into a rebel dungeon, and thus testify to her principles.

But in spite of this person's requisition, it was evident that His Majesty had a good many sympathisers in King's and Queen's Counties. Not only was there an Episcopal Church at Jamaica, but Mr. Burnet, the Presbyterian minister, was a staunch loyalist, and it was a great comfort to Mrs. Maverick to have his opinion on how things were going.

Although it was certain that the Fleet was on its way from Halifax, and there were rumours that Sir Peter Parker and General Clinton were coming up from the Carolinas, there was a rebellious spirit abroad. Mr. Matthews, the Mayor of New York, was audaciously seized at Flatbush, only a day or two before the long-expected Fleet came crowding past the Narrows. Staten Island was immediately occupied; and not many days afterwards Admiral Howe came from England, and Sir Henry Clinton arrived from the South.

The joy occasioned by these arrivals was only slightly damped to the ladies at Flatbush, by the possibility of their finding themselves lodged on a field of battle. But Flatbush could scarcely be said to lie on the way to New York from Staten Island; and Captain Digby would be sure to see that they received no harm.

Jacob Quackenboss, who always seemed to have business at Blazing Star Ferry, had brought them more than one letter from the Captain. Fred congratulated them on not having gone to Halifax—it was, he observed, “a cursed cold wintry place, with little to eat, and less to drink”—and expressed himself very hopefully as to the immediate results of the campaign. “By all accounts,” he wrote, “Mr. Washington’s army is a mere ragged rout, and is deserting every day. Cheer up, dear sister; one more brush, and I trust we shall for the future keep our swords for Frenchmen. This unnatural rebellion must be nipped in the bud—hang one or two of the leaders, especially S. A——s, and then issue a general pardon. Everybody says His Majesty will consent to redress most of their grievances as soon as they lay down their arms.”

This indiscreet letter was within an ace of falling into the hands of the same rebel Captain, or whatever he might be, who had already searched the house. He was riding by, just as Jacob drove up at the door, and called out to him with an oath not to let him catch him carrying any treasonable correspondence, or it would be the worse for him. Jacob, who was handing out some parcels to his wife, merely looked round, and Captain Marrener rode on.

Mr. Justice Jones paid the ladies several visits, as soon as he returned from circuit, and would have had them take up their quarters in his house at Fort Neck, but that, as he said, he was convinced he was a particular mark for the rebels’ enmity; and at this moment Mrs. Jones was not at home. They had not seen

the Justice for two or three weeks, when one day he came over from Fort Neck, with the news that his wife had at last got home, and intended calling on the ladies in a few days. The Judge—who was a dapper gentleman of five-and-forty or so, with remarkably piercing dark eyes, and brows as sharply arched as the string of a cross-bow—was fuller than ever of the misdoings of the rebels in general, and of his own grievances in particular. He had, as he took care to observe, held the Courts as usual up to the very last—for which, and for his well-known loyalty, he had just been summoned to appear before the Committee of the Provincial Congress, and show cause why he should be considered a friend to America. “But I’ll see ’em damned first, before I’ll obey a rebel summons, and give in to their oppression and tyranny,” cries the Judge; and then begs pardon for forgetting himself, but such con-founded impudence is enough to make Job himself use strong language.

The Judge then went on to tell them a long story of Lord Stirling’s incivility to Mrs. Jones, when she asked for a pass to return to Fort Neck. The Judge had a fine town-house at Mount Pitt, which he had built himself, but he had no pleasure in it, now that General Lee had built a great redoubt close by,—which, to crown all, was called, if you please, “Jones’s Hill Fort!”

“As if,” cries the Judge, “I was a rebel like themselves!”

The Judge’s indignation seemed to be about equally divided between the designing demagogues who had instigated the rebellion (the Smiths in particular coming in for his roundest denunciations), and the unprincipled crown-servants who, according to him, had formed a deliberate plan to ruin both Great Britain and America, in order to enrich themselves.

In about a week, he came over again—more peppery than ever. It seemed that on his return from visiting the ladies, he had found what old Nan was accustomed to call a “*posse cotatis*,” waiting to arrest him for not obeying the summons which had so highly offended him. He had been taken over to the city, detained three days, and then discharged by Mr. Gouverneur Morris—the only one of the Committee who attended—on his parole to appear when called on.

“You see me therefore, a prisoner on parole, Ma’am,” says the Judge. “A pretty way to treat one of the chief magistrates of New York, for doing his duty! But what can you expect of fellows that will treat a lady as Washington and Stirling

did my wife t'other day? But they'll dance to another tune, now the Fleet has come!"

The ladies had other mild distractions to enable them to pass the time less wearily. Mr. Burnet of Jamaica sometimes invited them to come and drink a dish of tea with him and his family—an invitation issued *sub rosa*, as tea still stank in rebel nostrils. On such occasions, he would fetch them and drive them back in his own chaise.

It was one day late in July, when the sunshine lay burning hot in the wide dusty street of Jamaica as they drove through, and the boughs of the weeping-ashes hung down like thirsty tongues. They had spent a very agreeable afternoon in looking over Mr. Burnet's collection of Lebrun's plates of the Passions, and drinking some excellent India tea.

"I protest, Mr. Burnet," says Mrs. Maverick, "I shall take it very unfriendly, if you don't contrive to smuggle me a package of this tea. Poor Mrs. Quackenboss's is a sorry wash, though she vows 'tis real Bohea—and I do believe she puts in twice as much for me as she ever did for her own drinking. I've told her a hundred times not to stand for the price—and I'm sure I make our being here well worth her while—but she says 'tis the best she can get, and, I believe, poor soul, thinks I'm fanciful for finding fault with it!"

Upon this Mr. Burnet insisted on presenting Mrs. Maverick there and then with a pound of his own mixture, saying with a twinkle of his eye, he doubted not he could get more where that came from.

As it was not a time for unarmed travellers to be gadding about late at night, Mr. Burnet soon after this had his mare put in. It was a fine warm evening, but a white mist was already rising from the swamps beyond Hempstead.

They had got no farther than Betts's tavern (Althea sitting bodkin, with very little room to spare), when it became apparent that there was a commotion in the town. A crowd of people were assembled in front of the tavern, listening to a man dressed in a white linen frock, with a fringe round the neck and arms, and a white feather in his hat. This person was reading a document which he held in one hand, while with the other he emphasised his periods. Althea thought she recognised him as one of the party in the kitchen of the inn at the ferry, the day of her landing. Marrener stood not far off him.

Mr. Burnet, on seeing this, was for turning his horse's head

to go round by another way ; but Captain Marrener ran up and seized the reins, exclaiming,—“Come on, Doctor, you’re just in the nick of time to hear the Glorious Declaration of Independence read ! Oh, we won’t hurt the ladies ! But we can’t let you sheer off.” So saying, he led the chaise up to the tavern door, disregarding all Mr. Burnet’s remonstrances.

“Late ?” he said. “It ain’t quite sundown yet—you must stop and see the fireworks. And if you’re afraid, I’ll take the ladies home—I know where they live.”

He grinned at Althea as he spoke, and she then perceived that he had a paper stuck in his hat. She saw the words “£10 REWARD,” and “His MAJESTY’S Commissioners,” and was pretty sure it was the new placard just issued, offering a reward for the person who had taken down the Manifesto from the church-doors.

A number of minute-men, all in their white frocks, were drawn up outside the tavern, with a drummer in front, who beat a tattoo as often as the orator paused in his reading.

The occupants of the chaise were compelled to listen to the Declaration, and to hear the shout of triumph with which it was received—the reader leading the huzzas, waving his hat high in the air. Then, to the beat of drum, and with more shouting, he took the flag which his lieutenant had been holding all this while, and ripped off the letters which formed the King’s name, leaving only the word *LIBERTY*.

After this, the speaker, declaring that his tongue clave to the roof of his mouth, called for a glass ; and on its being brought out to him, observed that he would propose a toast—those who had no glasses could drink it in the spirit.

“Do not laugh, gentlemen,” said the orator—who, however, unless his appearance belied him, was jovially inclined. “Hear my toast. A cobweb pair of breeches, a hedgehog saddle, a hard-trotting horse, and continual riding, to all the enemies of America !”

This toast was received with roars of laughter and applause, and many not over-friendly glances began to be directed towards the chaise.

Everybody on the ground had uncovered except Mr. Burnet, who sat quietly in the chaise, from time to time addressing a word of reassurance to the ladies. Althea had drawn her green silk calash closely over her head—her face was flushed, her eyes sparkled with indignation ; but it was Mrs. Maverick who,

provoked beyond her patience, called out in a voice which was distinctly heard by every one there,

“God save King George the Third!”

The person who had read the Declaration started, glanced round him, and then coming quickly up to the chaise, and removing his hat for a moment, said determinedly,—“Dr. Burnet, we have had too much of this sort of thing. You have just cried ‘God save King George the Third!’ for your own pleasure; you must say ‘God save America!’ for ours, before you leave this ground.”

Great was Mr. Burnet’s dilemma. True, he had not himself cried, “God save King George!” but it was, of course, impossible to throw the blame on a lady—and, as every one there knew perfectly well which of the party it was who had uttered the obnoxious sentiment, would have been a useless piece of cowardice to boot. He saw that the consequences might be ugly, but his Presbyterian gorge was aroused, and he cried manfully that he would say nothing on compulsion.

Mrs. Maverick, however, had instantly rushed to the rescue.

“’Twas I, sir, that said it, and I am ready to stand to it,” said the undaunted old lady, flashing on the Captain of the minute-men a pair of eyes that were still almost as bright as Althea’s own.

“Madam, I am sorry to hear it,” returned the Captain. “’Tis a pity to see courage and spirit wasted in a bad cause. But we all know Dr. Burnet’s sentiments, and are determined that he shall for once in his life wish well to his country, or pay the penalty.”

“We shall only just slip him on a suit of American thick-set with white trimmings,” cried a voice at the edge of the crowd. Most of the rest laughed, and pressed closer round the chaise. The mare began to be restive, and plunged a little, but several volunteers promptly went to her head, and quieted her more judiciously than could have been expected—while Althea exclaimed, “Surely, sir, you do not threaten a minister of the Gospel with violence!”

“He was a citizen before he was a minister,” replied the Captain of the minute-men, and Marrener added;

“And we shall tar and feather him as a citizen, and not as a minister.”

"You will have to reckon with me first, though, before you do it, Mr. Marrener," said a voice which made Althea start as if she had been shot,—while Mrs. Maverick cried, "Oh, Mr. Fleming, for God's sake, protect us from insult!"

"You may be sure I will do that, Madam," said Jasper, taking off his hat to the ladies—but his eyes never once rested on Althea. He took the reins from Marrener, and asked him sternly if that was the way he served his country?

"We only want him to say, 'God save America!'" said Marrener sulkily; "and I should like to know who you are to prevent it?"

"I am a Colonel in the Continental army," returned Jasper; he wore a dark blue coat, with yellow buttons and scarlet facings, and had a small sword by his side.

"Not seen much fighting yet, I reckon," sneered Marrener, who had a grudge against Mr. Burnet, and thought he saw his prey about to escape him.

"I was at Bunker's Hill."

This reply, quietly as it was made, produced a great effect—of which Jasper took immediate advantage to obtain a promise that no molestation should be offered to Mr. Burnet. But he was obliged to submit to a condition—Mr. Burnet and the ladies must stay and see King George burnt in effigy.

"I would save you the annoyance if I could," said Jasper in a low voice to Mrs. Maverick; "but they are very angry with Mr. Burnet, as the only loyalist Presbyterian on Long Island, and 'tis best to give in to them in a small matter."

"That's very fine, Mr. Fleming, I protest!" cried the old lady, indiscreetly loud. "You have just rescued us from an unpleasant predicament, and I don't mean to quarrel with you; but I'd have you to know that 'tis not so small a matter to a loyal subject to be forced to stand by and see a gross affront offered to His Majesty!"

"You can avoid it, Madam, by letting Mr. Burnet say, 'God save America!'" observed Jasper maliciously. And Mr. Burnet gravely replied that, knowing what was meant by it, 'twould be against his conscience to do so.

The bonfire was prepared under a gibbet, from which hung a rude effigy which had been wrapped in the Union. Its face was black, and resembled rather the countenance of one of Dunmore's recruits than the homely features of Farmer George,

but that a profane caricature of His Majesty's sacred person was intended, could not be doubted.

"What seem'd its head
The likeness of a kingly crown had on."

But the crown was of wood, and stuck with feathers instead of rubies. Along with it on the gibbet, gently flapping in the evening breeze against this travesty of a diadem, hung the tattered bunting just torn from the flag of Liberty. The crowd gathered round in silence, as light was set to the bon-fire. Jasper stood on one side of the chaise, while Marrener at the mare's head seemed resolved that the involuntary spectators of the performance should have a good place whence to view it.

"Wa'al, Miss Digby, I reely shouldn't have expected to find you a-lookin' on at a game o' this sort, that I shouldn't, reely now," says Captain Ward, coming up unperceived behind the chaise. "I happened to be passin' through Jamaica this evenin'—but this is an altogether unexpected pleasure."

"I am not here with my good-will," says Althea; while the Captain, seeing Colonel Fleming, whispers something in his ear—at which Althea fancies he looks graver than before.

When the gunpowder under His Majesty's arms had blown up, and the royal *effigies* lay a shapeless and blackened mass in the glowing heat of the fire, Mr. Marrener professed himself satisfied, made a rough apology to Colonel Fleming, and offered to conduct Mr. Burnet safe back to his own house—for Jasper had insisted on himself seeing the ladies home.

As the chaise was constructed to carry only two (though with a little squeezing it constantly carried three), Captain Ward took his leave, and said he would wait at Betts's tavern for Colonel Fleming. This he said in a significant tone which went to Althea's heart, as showing but too plainly how actively Jasper was engaged in rebellion.

Jasper scarcely spoke a word on the way. He drove so fast, that the minister's well-fed mare submitted out of sheer astonishment. Althea thought he was in haste to have the drive over, and would have died sooner than beg him to go slower—while Mrs. Maverick made no remonstrance, only praying to be once safely housed under her own gables.

So much in haste was Jasper, that he was only persuaded to come indoors, on the score that Mr. Burnet's mare was old,

and ought to rest half an hour before going back to Jamaica ; and so much flurried was Mrs. Maverick, that she all but offered Colonel Fleming some of that excellent tea which had been weighing down her pocket for the last three hours. He refused all refreshment, and, it must be honestly owned, behaved altogether in a very uncomfortable manner. "Though, to be sure," said Mrs. Maverick afterwards, in excuse for him, "I don't know what he could have talked about, without bringing up some sore subject or other ; and I think he felt it."

Mrs. Quackenboss had put candles in the parlour—a room whose pervading perfume was beeswax and turpentine, and which stood the whole year swept and garnished, in eternal expectation of guests who never came.

In this inhospitable apartment Jasper and Althea were left alone for a few minutes, while Mrs. Maverick went out to speak to Mrs. Quackenboss. As Jasper stood near the table, his head a little bent, his right hand resting on the table, and his left (holding his cocked hat, which bore the symbol of rebellion) resting on his hip, Althea sat watching him, torn by a conflict of feelings which she herself did not, or would not, understand. His very dress was a kind of high-water mark, to show how far things had gone. And there was a change in him which she could not define to herself, but which gave her a maddening desire to provoke him to some such display of weakness as she had occasionally goaded him into in Boston. She could have cried with rage—at him, but also at herself. At last, something—perhaps the fear of her cousin's return—got the better of her pride, and she said sharply,—“Have you sworn not to speak to me, Mr. Fleming? Are you aware that you have stood there for ten minutes, without condescending to notice my presence by so much as a single word?”

He started.

“Have I not spoke to you?” he said in great confusion. “I beg a thousand pardons—indeed ’twas not intentional—I was not conscious that I had not done so.”

“You had merely forgot me, in thinking of more important matters,” she said sarcastically. “What wonder, when you wear that uniform? And, after all, what can you have to say to me?”

“Good God!” he exclaimed, turning towards her with

sudden passion. "What have I done to you, that you should delight to torture me thus?"

Althea turned pale, but before she could reply, Mrs. Maverick came bustling in, with a cup of hot wine.

"There, Mr. Fleming," she said, "this will keep the fog out of your throat, this damp evening. I was a mother to you so long that I can't quite give over now; though, indeed, 'tis more than you deserve, as long as you wear that by your side." She pointed to his sword as she spoke—but she looked at him very kindly as she thus rebuked him.

"'Tis most true, Madam, that your kindness far exceeds my deserts," said Jasper, taking the cup. Then, as he raised it to his lips, he looked at Mrs. Maverick and said, smiling, "For this, and all the many kindnesses I have unworthily received at your hands, Madam, pray believe that you have my most heart-felt thanks."

But, though Jasper smiled, his face was very pale, and Althea thought his brow was contracted as if by bodily pain.

He kissed Mrs. Maverick's hand, and had begun to say, "May we——" when he checked himself, drank off the rest of the wine, and, setting down the cup, said hurriedly to Mrs. Maverick that he was exceedingly sorry he had not been able to spare them the annoyance to which they had been subjected, but party-feeling was so bitter that he had not even expected to get them off as easily as he had done—Marrener could have made it very unpleasant if he had chosen.

"Of course, Mr. Fleming, I saw very well 'twas your saying you was at Bunker's Hill got us off," said Mrs. Maverick. "They was all turned in a moment; and very grieved it made me, to see such a spirit in them."

"I was obliged to say it," returned Jasper, a little embarrassed. "Believe me, 'twas not intended as a boast, but merely to shut Marrener's mouth, and make them more inclined to listen to me."

Without giving Mrs. Maverick time to reply, Jasper begged to be excused for taking his leave. He kissed Althea's hand, desired her to remember him very kindly to Captain Digby, and in a few minutes was rattling along the dark road towards Jamaica, at such a pace that two or three people who wished to speak with Dominie Van Zinder, thought it must be he, and ran out to stop the chaise.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

CONFUSED NOISES.

What stratagems, how fell, how butcherly,
Erroneous, mutinous, and unnatural,
This deadly quarrel daily doth beget !

THIRD PART OF KING HENRY VI.

THAT sacrilegious insult offered to the divinity which hedges Kings, was not left long unavenged. Jacobus Quackenboss (who in some mysterious manner was evidently in communication with the Tories, though not even to Mrs. Maverick would he admit the fact) brought several more letters for Althea from her brother. These, though necessarily very guarded, prepared her for what was to happen. Meanwhile, the rebels were preparing on their part for a desperate resistance ; and many of the leading Tories—among them Mr. Justice Jones—had been seized and arraigned before a Board of rebel officers, and ordered to be sent away, and kept away, till the battle should have been fought.

It was known long before the 22d of August, that New York would be attacked from Long Island, and on that day a large British force landed near New Utrecht. No one at Flatbush slept much that night. At intervals, the reports of distant musketry awoke those who had fallen into an uneasy slumber ; and early next morning, when Mrs. Maverick and Althea came downstairs, they found Mrs. Quackenboss busy tying bits of red bunting to the gates and palings, and even to the nearest trees.

“ I’m sure I’m truly glad to see that colour, Mrs. Quackenboss,” said Mrs. Maverick, coming out into the narrow strip of garden, where late-flowering roses shed sweetness ; “ but it seems dreadful too—it reminds me of the Destroying Angel passing by.”

By noon, a whole legion of Destroying Angels swarmed into Flatbush, in the shape of a detachment of Earl Cornwallis’s reserve. The farm lay temptingly on the road, and the house was presently filled with thirsty light-infantry, demanding refreshment. To them enter Mrs. Maverick—arrayed in her stiffest brocade, with a kerchief and apron of the finest India muslin, and leaning on her ivory-handled crutch-stick—and desires to know which is the officer in command ?

"This is a loyal house, sir, as you have doubtless perceived," she says with infinite dignity. "I have already given orders for you to be served with the best the house affords—'tis less than I could have wished, but my tenant assured me 'twould be impossible to make greater preparations, without the certainty of their being instantly seized upon by the rebels. I have only to add, sir, that we place ourselves under your protection; and—though I'm sure 'tis unnecessary—I may inform you that I am cousin to His late Excellency, Governor Hutchinson, and that the young lady with me is sister to Captain Digby, now serving in your army."

To this the officer replied that the ladies might be confident the utmost possible respect should be shown them, and was in the middle of a most polite apology for the inconvenience which he was unwillingly causing them, when Captain Digby himself came hurrying in, and appeared greatly relieved at finding all well. The lower part of the house being by this time crammed with soldiers, the Captain retired to embrace his sister and Mrs. Maverick on the upper landing, where a few hasty questions and answers were exchanged. Fred was looking bronzed and hearty. He had filled out, too, a little—in spite of the poor fare at Halifax—and was in excellent spirits. "In a week at latest, we shall be in New York," he said, as he bade them farewell.

For several days after this, the lonely farmhouse was never quiet. There was marching and counter-marching. Mounted officers galloped along, leaving clouds of dust behind them. Artillery lumbered past, and Jacob Quackenboss's fat horses found themselves harnessed to a gun-carriage, and made to pull harder than they had ever done before during the whole course of their sleek lives. There was firing in the woods—pretty hot sometimes; and a few wounded men were brought in, whom Mrs. Maverick and Althea tended as well as they could, till the surgeon came. And then one night, a rumour spread that the rebels were to be attacked next morning.

By this time, the whole British army had passed over to Newtown, and Flatbush was left like the sands when the tide is down. The slip of garden was trampled sadly, and all Mrs. Quackenboss's tulip-bulbs were ruined; but old Nan did not much afflict herself on these accounts. Her resentment, both loud and deep, was directed against the Hessians—who, on their way to encamp in the village, had halted long enough at

the farm to convey her whole remaining store of pickled beef, and had then and there guzzled all her buttermilk. The said buttermilk would have been regarded in less thrifty districts as partaking of the character of hog-wash; but here it was being reserved to make *mush* for supper, as the chilly autumn evenings came on; and great was the wrath with which old Nan beheld the masterful Hessians emptying her churn. She went so far as to call them "Injun-niggers"—an epithet which Nan, herself a cross between those two races, reserved for the darkest shade of criminal.

"A pack o' yaller varments!" she screamed, wringing her skinny hands in rage and grief. "Eb'ry drop o' dat mush gone! Ef on'y master'd a bin here! He'd a sent the hull *posse cotatis* about their business!"

In saying this, however, old Nan idealised that pacific Dutchman—who had for the last year or so devoted too much thought to the preserving a whole skin to his body, to care to risk that inestimable blessing for a churnful of buttermilk.

A half-foolish fellow named Anthony, who lived at Hempstead, brought the first tidings of the battle. He came in a little after noon, very dusty and footsore, and told a long story of how he had guided the British, the night before, across a pass in the hills by Jamaica—left unguarded by old Putnam, whom Greene's illness had placed in command. Anthony had long been suspected by the Whigs of being a Tory agent, and had more than once only saved himself from unpleasant consequences by playing the fool. He was an idle good-for-nothing fellow, who never did anything but fight cocks and loiter about, but many believed he had more wit than he chose to own. This not very trustworthy authority said further that the rebels were routed, and had fled in confusion to their lines—hundreds, he added, had been drowned in trying to pass Gowanus Creek.

Anthony's account was soon confirmed—so far, at least, as related to the result of the day. The rebels were totally defeated, three thousand of them killed or taken, and the Marylanders in particular almost cut to pieces; and three Generals made prisoners. Captain Digby sent a message to say that he was safe and well; and, as Mrs. Maverick observed, nothing was wanting to complete one's satisfaction but to know that Mr. Washington himself was a prisoner, and that poor Mr. Fleming was unhurt—since, whatever his faults, she should be sorry to see her old friend's son perish miserably.

It may have been this remark of her cousin's, which caused Althea to dream that night, that Jasper Fleming was brought out to be hanged in front of the State House in Boston. Althea seemed in her dream to be standing at the window of Mrs. Maverick's drawing-room in King Street—and with the odd slowness of perception common in dreams, had been idly watching the gallows for some time before she knew what it was. Suddenly, a file of soldiers came up the street with Jasper, his arms bound, and bare-headed. She thought he saw her, and stopped,—and with the anguish of the recognition she awoke.

But the days which followed brought no news of Jasper. Mr. Washington, seeing that things were desperate, very cleverly slipped across with his army to New York, thus escaping immediate destruction. A few days afterwards, the British commander made another attempt at a compromise. Dr. Franklin and Mr. Adams waited on His Majesty's Commissioners on Staten Island; but finding that Lord Howe—who received his old friend the Doctor with much kindness—was only empowered to pardon on a full submission, they declined his overtures, and the interview had no other result than the exchange of the captive Generals.

A few days after this, the rebels retired from New York, and the British army immediately entered it. No day passed without the sounds and alarms of war. Wild rumours of fresh disaster to the rebels spread—almost, as it seemed, on the wings of the wind. Some of these, however, were brought to Flatbush by a more visible Mercury, in the shape of Anthony. Rumour “painted full of tongues” was not more agog with news than he. The rebels were seized with panic,—the women and children had run shrieking about the streets of New York, when they saw the British men-of-war pass up the East River. And two whole brigades had run away at Bloomingdale on the 15th, without firing a shot, leaving General Washington alone—who, it was said, was so transported with rage and despair at their dastardly behaviour, that if two of his officers had not seized his bridle and forced him to retire, he would have rushed on the enemy, and must inevitably have been taken or slain.

After narrating these and other stories, and freely partaking of such good things as old Nan had contrived to conceal from the Hessians, Anthony would take his departure, to retail his news at the next farmhouse—there to receive a like reward.

Jacob Quackenboss spent these days in intermittent at-

tempts to learn what had become of his horses, for which he had received a memorandum, signed by the officer with whom Mrs. Maverick had had those passages of civility. His wife and old Nan remonstrated against being left with only the old man and the boy to defend them; but Jacob, with much reason, replied that three would be of no more use than two against a regiment, and that if he once lost trace of the horses he might never see them again. Old Nan next entreated him, when he saw the King's General, to tell him about the pickled beef and the buttermilk, and to "give him some hard plums"—to which advice Jacob listened with an impassive countenance, being deeply penetrated with the conviction that a still tongue not only makes a wise head, but is likely to preserve that head from being broken. He soon after set off on the search for his horses—observing, as he stepped across his threshold, that while the Hessian was there, no one would trouble them.

The Hessian was one of the men who had been brought in wounded before the battle. He was so badly hurt, that when Mrs. Maverick asked if it would do him harm to move him, the surgeon had replied that it would most likely be his death—not that there was much hope of him in any case. "Then you shall not move him!" cried the old lady; and they had kept him ever since, the three women taking it in turns to sit up with him. It was a singular and pathetic situation. The poor young fellow—he seemed to be only three or four-and-twenty—could speak no English, and communication was carried on by signs and by a few Low-Dutch words which Yonichy knew. Althea had proposed sending for one of the Dutch pastors; and Dominie Van Zinder happening to drive by soon after, she ran out, and begged him to step up and see the wounded man.

The pastor was a lean and shrivelled little man, with long silver locks under a sugar-loaf hat, like a portrait of Richard Baxter. He climbed down from his chaise, tied his horse's reins to the gate-post, and followed Althea upstairs. The sick man's eyes turned anxiously towards him, and a flush came over his face.

"Leave us," said the Dominie, taking the chair from which Yonichy had risen. He was a quaint figure, as he sat there, still wearing his high-pointed hat—his lean face, full of vigour and intentness, contrasting strangely with the large frame and

heavy countenance of the man whose life was so fast ebbing away.

"We understood each other a little," said the Dominie when he came out—the women had heard him praying—"and I have here the address of his father. I will come again to-morrow."

But that evening, a change came on, and it was evident the poor fellow could not last many hours. It was Althea's turn to sit up, and she insisted on taking it, and on sending her aunt and Mrs. Quackenboss to bed. There was nothing to be done, but he could not be left to die alone. He lay quite still—indeed he had sunk into the stupor preceding death—only now and then murmuring a name which sounded like "Leonora." A little after midnight he opened his eyes, and fixing them on Althea, said some words which she knew to be thanks. "All very gut," said the poor fellow, and then he pointed upwards—as if he would say that God must thank them, since he could not. And then he closed his eyes, and spoke no more.

But when Althea wiped the tears out of her own eyes, she noticed a strange red glow in the room, and going to the window, saw that the sky was full of a lurid light—which instantly reminded her of the awful spectacle she had beheld at Oglethorpe, two years before. It brightened and brightened—rising and falling, and then rising higher—until the whole sky was illuminated. It was in the direction of New York, and she remembered that Anthony had said the rebels meant to burn the city.

The red glare continued all night, and when the dawn rose a heavy pall of smoke hung where it had been. By that time the poor young Hessian lay still—he had drawn his last breath so quietly that Althea did not know it for some minutes.

The next day was Sunday, and after the afternoon service, Pastor Van Zinder (as Pastor Rubel was that day at Jamaica) buried poor Heinrich Welder—for that was the young Hessian soldier's name—in the graveyard at Flatbush. Mrs. Maverick and Althea attended the funeral. This Mrs. Maverick considered to be a mark of respect due to a young man who had fallen in the royal cause, whether he were a gentleman or no; but she had woven a little romance, founded on the poor fellow's decent behaviour, that he had run away to enlist, and was above the rank of a common soldier.

The Dominie drove the ladies back as far as where the road to Flatbush runs into that which leads to Flatlands—and then, as all was quiet, and he had a sick parishioner to visit, he set them down, and drove on his way. They found Anthony sitting in the kitchen at a great plate of broken victuals, while Yonichy stood listening to him, with Matilda holding on by her apron, and old Nan, with her arms akimbo, calling some persons unknown, “yaller varments.”

Anthony, it seemed, had just come from New York, and had brought terrible news. Half the city had been burned down on Friday night; he had himself seen the flames come leaping and roaring up both sides of Broadway like fiery horses, and climbing the steeples of Trinity Church. Dr. Inglis had but just saved St. Paul’s, and his own Church of Trinity was burned to the ground. Anthony made his hearers’ flesh creep, by his description of how he had seen suspected persons seized by the soldiers, and flung into the flames, and a man hanged on a tavern sign-post in Roosivelt Street.

“An’ sarve ’em right, tarnation varments!” cried old Nan.

But Anthony had kept his most thrilling narrative until the ladies should return. Yesterday morning, very early, a spy had been caught at Mother Chich’s, at The Cedars, near Huntington, and this morning he was hanged just by the Barracks in the old graveyard. Anthony had seen him brought out from the Provost, dressed in a white jacket and cap, trimmed with black, with his coffin carried beside him, and the Provost-Marshal Cunningham walking behind, and the black hangman carrying the rope. A handsome fellow—tall and fair, and blue-eyed, Anthony said, and quite young. It was said that he was Captain Nathan Hale, who last May took the sloop under the very nose of the *Asia*. Anthony had thrust his way through the crowd, and seen and heard all—or so he declared. The rebel died game, and said he was only sorry he had only one life to lose for his country. As Anthony was returning, he had heard that Captain Hale had been taken in consequence of information given by his own cousin—who saw him waiting at Mother Chich’s for a boat, and suspected he was on a spy’s errand. His boots were full of plans of the British works, all written in Latin—they said he had taught school at New London, before the rebellion broke out. Now that the rebels were put to flight, Anthony called it the rebellion.

This story filled Althea with horror—she involuntarily con-

nected it with her dream. Anthony was positive as to the extreme youth of the spy ; twenty-one at the most was as much as he could be—but when Anthony said he had blue eyes, Althea's blood had run cold.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

THE RETURN FROM GLORY.

THE rebels had appealed to Heaven ; but so far Heaven seemed to favour the cause of King George, and those strong battalions in which alone General Lee declared he put his trust. If no such signal disaster as the defeat on Long Island befell the rebel arms in the North, they had slowly lost all the ground they had gained ; and by the time the fire in New York was well extinguished, Sir Guy Carleton had entirely changed the face of affairs in Canada.

With an army dispirited by repulse and very ill found, and himself slowly recovering from a severe and painful wound, Benedict Arnold had maintained his position all through the spring, and kept up the blockade of Quebec. Through the clear wintry air, he could see the sentinel pacing the snow-covered ramparts, and the British standard drooping idly in the frosty stillness against the flagstaff, while the tin steeples of the town twinkled against the deep blue Canadian sky. But all attempts to take the town failed, so constant was the vigilance of the besieged—some of the British officers sleeping in their clothes for eighty nights together—and Cape Diamond echoed to no later victor's tread. Governor Carleton had added conciliation to valour and vigilance, and had thereby done what no valour or vigilance could have availed to accomplish—he had turned the heart of Canada to the British cause. The American army, which had expected to be welcomed as a deliverer, saw itself regarded as an invader, and its position was rapidly becoming untenable.

Noel Branzholm had by this time had ample opportunities of reflecting on the caprices of Fortune. He had seen the best laid plans fail, the most dauntless valour and the most untiring efforts seemingly thrown away. For all this even his impatient spirit might have found consolation, in remembering how many times in the world's history desperate causes have suddenly

recovered themselves. But his young inexperience had been put to a harder trial still.

It would seem but natural that such brilliant exploits and indefatigable zeal as Arnold's should have been recognised by Congress. But from the beginning he had been singularly unfortunate. The anticipation by Ethan Allen of his scheme for the surprise of Ticonderoga was prophetic of the fate which awaited him; he was, it seemed, destined always to see others reap his hard-won laurels. For all thanks, a Commission had been sent, to put him virtually on his trial; and when he had taken or assisted in taking every post on the Lakes, he had been superseded and recalled.

In the second expedition to Canada, he was at first more fortunate—although the great attempt failed. But almost as soon as he was able to mount his horse, his evil star once more pursued him. Colonel Hazen's refusal to take charge of the goods seized at Montreal (under instructions from a Commission) had involved him in endless vexations; and he had also had a difference, ending in a serious quarrel, with Lieutenant-Colonel Brown, about the plundering of the officers' baggage taken at Sorel. Brown had been at the capture of Ticonderoga, and was a partisan of Colonel Allen's, and made no attempt to hide that he was General Arnold's enemy.

In one of the last days at Montreal, and when the abandonment of Canada was already decided on, Arnold sent for his young Captain, to give him some last orders. Noel found him in a bitter mood. He had evidently been writing a letter—and judging from the blots which disfigured his usually clear and firm handwriting, had dashed it off in hot haste. He observed Noel's glance, and said ironically,—“I have received another of Colonel Brown's favours—so much hatred is enough to turn a man's head. He has never forgiven me for having been at the taking of Ticonderoga. He writes to assure me that he has friends in Congress, who will see that my deeds are brought to the light of day. I've told him that in that case I shall be much beholden to him.”

“Is it about the goods Colonel Hazen left at Chamblay, sir?” asked Noel. “Surely when the facts are brought before Congress——”

“By that time, so much mud will have been thrown at me that some of it will stick,” returned the General. “Colonel Brown takes the pains to inform me that I have enemies—a

conclusion I had arrived at some time since. Hazen leaves the goods on the banks of the river to be stole by the first-comers, and the Commission demands *my* arrest !”

“But they reckoned without their host, sir—General Gates was too much of a soldier to listen to them,” interposed Noel.

Arnold laughed. “He has been very civil to me,” he said, “so we will let his qualities pass—he is another Lee, without Lee’s brutal animal courage. Time will show which is most mischievous—the bully braggart or the specious braggart. Meanwhile, they may traduce me, but I will be the last man to leave Canada, as I was the first to enter it.”

The General kept his word. He made a masterly retreat to St. John’s—never more than a day’s march ahead of the British forces—and embarked all his men without confusion. Captain Branzholm’s company was among the last to embark—he had begged this favour, and the General, after looking steadily at him for a moment, as his manner was when he was pleased, had granted it with a smile which flashed across his dark face like a ray of sunshine over a gloomy landscape. Noel would have led a forlorn-hope to win one of those stern smiles.

It happened thus, that when the last boat was ready to push off and follow the others—already pulling steadily across the fast darkening waters of Lake Champlain—the General, who was mounted, saw Captain Branzholm standing close to the water’s edge.

“There’s just time to reconnoitre their advance-guard,” he said, and turned his horse’s head inland ; Noel leaped on the wretched nag he had been riding, and followed him.

The June evening was closing in, but gleams of fire could be seen flashing among the distant trees, and once they heard a bugle sounded.

“There they come,” said the General, reining in his horse. “No one can say we fled like the wicked, when no man pursued ! Might I but once lead a charge against them, with Morgan and his men behind me, I would be well content to leave my body on the field !” He sat for a moment perfectly still on his horse, amidst the silence of evening, which during those moments even the advancing wave of war did not break. Then a bugle was winded in the woods, and Arnold, shaking off the reverie he had fallen into and exclaiming,—“To everything there is a time and a season, says King Solomon. This is the hour for running

away," set spurs to his horse, and galloped back to the shore—but not till Noel had seen three or four horsemen leave the covert of the woods, and start in pursuit.

Arrived at the beach, where the boat waited, Arnold dismounted, and began hastily to take off his horse's saddle and bridle. "No Britisher shall ride him," he said. "'Tis a pity—but 'twere a greater pity to let so good a horse be pressed into a bad cause."

As he spoke, he threw the saddle and bridle into Noel's arms, and ordered a soldier who stood waiting to shoot the horse.

"Behind the shoulder," he said. "Do not put the poor beast to torture."

"'Twas a merciful death, at least," he muttered, as the horse rolled over with one convulsive quiver. "And now we have not a moment to lose!"

Noel flung the saddle into the boat, and leapt in himself, in obedience to a gesture of the General's.

"I must be the last!" cried Arnold, motioning the soldier to precede him. Then pushing the boat off with his own hands, he too leapt in. "Pull hard, men," he said, bending his eyes intently toward the land.

As they pulled from shore, Noel fancied he heard the beat of drum from time to time, but the wind was on their quarter, and the rowers were pulling hard, and soon all sounds from the land died away.

No one spoke; the click of the oars in the rowlocks kept measured time, and here and there a star, unclosing like a waking eye, gleamed pale above the northern mountain-tops. But the General never moved. He sat, hour after hour, his left arm resting on the gunwale, supporting his chin with his hand, and his sword across his knees—looking forward into the darkness.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

GREEK JOINS GREEK.

THE retreat from Canada had not been decided on a day too soon. Sir Guy Carleton was by this time ready to attack the Provincials by water, as well as by land. He had provided himself with a little flotilla of vessels which could be taken to

pieces, and thus easily carried overland when necessary. With these, he hoped to command the Canadian waters, and work his way down to Ticonderoga and Albany, there to form a junction with the King's troops in New York, and thus isolate New England.

To oppose him, General Arnold had early in the summer obtained permission to form a naval armament. He had thrown himself into the work with his usual zeal; but he was obliged to make his own ships for the most part, and though he worked incessantly, and urged on his men to the utmost, he could not equal Carleton's fleet, and his own flotilla seemed destined to serve only to convey his men across the waters of Lake Champlain and Lake George, on their retreat from Canada. With his motley crew of landsmen he dared not oppose Carleton's tried seamen in open water, so when he knew the enemy was approaching, he anchored under Valcour Island—disposing his line of battle so that, if discovered, he could only be attacked in front.

Early on the morning of the 11th of October, the British squadron, with their battle-flags flying, rounded Cumberland Head, coming up with a fair wind. As they made the southern point of the island, the large ships fell behind, and Arnold instantly attacked the smaller vessels. But the odds were too great, and he was gradually pushed back. The unskilled crew ran the *Royal Savage* aground, and Arnold was obliged to go on board the *Congress*.

By noon the action was general. Carleton had twice the number of fighting ships, and was more than twice as heavy in metal as his enemy—but that enemy was made of the same stubborn stuff as himself, and did not stay to count his guns. Besides the fire from the ships, an incessant blaze of rifles was kept up by the Indians posted in the covert of the forests on the island and the mainland; but their fire did little harm, thanks to the fascines which Arnold had attached to his ships' sides. He pointed the guns himself; he seemed to be everywhere at once—directing, encouraging, repulsing attempts to board—while the conflict grew hotter and hotter as the day wore on, and the cannonade was heard as far away as Crown Point. The *Congress* had been hulled twelve times, and had received seven shots between wind and water; she reeled and staggered with the recoil of her own guns, and seemed as though she would settle down. Her mainmast was twice

struck, and her rigging cut to pieces ; but still Arnold refused to abandon her.

At last, night came on, and the British commander withdrew a little—but only, as Arnold presently ascertained, to post his fleet across the only channel whereby the Provincials could escape.

“He thinks he has got us,” said Arnold, looking round on the handful of officers he had called to a council. No one spoke. The *Philadelphia* had just sunk, and the *Washington* was every moment expected to follow her example. But when Arnold said abruptly,—“Gentlemen, the *Philadelphia* is sunk, the *Royal Savage* was abandoned this morning, and the *Congress* is as you see her. We have lost a considerable number in killed and wounded. We have spent three-quarters of our ammunition, and the enemy is greatly our superior in both ships and men. What do you say?” It was Noel who—seeing the General’s eye resting on him—ventured to reply, “I suppose, sir, we must break through.”

“Yes,” said the General slowly, looking at the two Colonels who stood beside him. “I suppose that is all we can do.”

It was a hazy night, but a fair wind had sprung up from the north after sundown. Every vessel put out her lights, leaving only a single signal-lantern in her stern, to guide the ship that followed her. As soon as the darkness of night had fairly come on, one vessel after another glided away silently before the wind.

General Arnold standing in the stern of the *Congress*, the last of the procession, with his hand laid heavily on Noel’s shoulder, watched the lights of the British squadron. In the intense stillness Noel could hear each breath the General drew ; and as often as a rope creaked, or a sail flapped, or the slightest movement was heard below, he felt his shoulder clutched more firmly.

Noel had time to think of many things, as they glided along over the waters rippled by the night wind. Long after they had slid past the shadowy outline of the last of the enemy’s vessels, and their lessening lights gleamed low on the lake like will-o’-the-wisps, he kept his watch by his General’s side, and wondered where Althea was that night, and thought—“At least, she cannot despise me now—and if she hears I have found a soldier’s death, she will perhaps permit herself to shed one tear for the rebel who loved her so well.”

At Schuyler's Island, twelve miles up the lake, the fugitive flotilla lay-to, to mend the sails of the *Washington*, and repair the most pressing damages. With their utmost diligence, they could not get away till the afternoon—and then the wind dropped, and presently veered round to the south. All that night, they beat up with sails and oars against the wind, but they had by morning got no farther than Split Rock; and as the sun broke through the fog, the Provincials saw the whole British fleet with every sail set, crowding down on them.

But even in this terrible predicament General Arnold did not despair. He ordered those vessels which had suffered least to press on under all sail towards Crown Point; while he, with the *Congress*, the *Washington*, and a few gondolas, held the enemy in check, and gained precious time. The *Washington* struck soon after the British opened their fire, but Arnold fought on in the crippled *Congress*—now almost a wreck. He was attacked by three schooners on his bow, one on his broadside, and two under his stern, all within musket-shot, but he showed his teeth to such effect that for five hours he held them all at bay, continually forcing his way nearer and nearer to the shore. The smoke of battle hung dense and black over the blue waters of the lake, and the artillery rolled echoing along the mountain sides which shut it in; but amidst the smoke the thirteen stripes still flew bravely from the *Congress*—whose riddled hull and torn rigging bore her witness that she had not shunned the thick of the fray. There is nothing like it in history, but Richard Grenvil's last fight. In the midst of that furious conflict, when for a moment the battle paused, Noel found himself close beside his beloved leader—from whose head he had more than once been so happy as to divert an enemy's sabre.

"This is warm work," says Arnold, with his grim smile, his dark face purple, and the veins on his forehead standing out like cords. "If we come alive out of this, they will scarce say again we are afraid to show fight! To be sure, though, we could hardly run away if we would."

"If we come alive out of this, sir," says Noel, all his own hot young blood in his face, "so help me Heaven, I will never fight under any General but you!"

The General's right hand held his sword—he laid his left on Noel's shoulder, and said, still smiling,—“Thou art a good lad, and deserving of a General more fortunate than I seem to be.”

"Fortune favours the brave!" cried Noel—and then the battle joined again.

This time, Arnold broke through, fighting to the last. There was a little creek on the east side of the channel, and into this he ran the *Congress* and the four gondolas which had remained with him. He made the marines wade ashore—then, protected by the fire from their muskets, he set fire to his ship, standing by her till the flames had taken hold. And so he left her, with her flag still flying defiantly amidst the flames, and, leaping from her bow to the beach, was the last to land.

That same evening, escaping an Indian ambush set for them, the retreating Provincials reached Crown Point, and pushing on, were at Ticonderoga next morning, where General Gates received them joyfully.

CHAPTER XL.

A HAPLESS LOVER.

'Tis glory only with her potent ray
Can chase the clouds that darken all his way.

ANNA SEWARD'S MONODY.

NOT long after New York was occupied, Mrs. Maverick and Miss Digby removed into the city, to a respectable lodging which Fred had found for them in the Bowery Lane; and although Mrs. Maverick professed to be for ever expecting that the rebels would set fire to New York again, they were very much more comfortable than they had been since they left Boston, and were certainly safer than they would have been on Long Island. The British occupation was far from rendering Long Island a desirable place of abode. What with rebel raids and Tory escapades, it was very insecure; and Mr. Burnet wrote to Mrs. Maverick, that he had but just been in time to stop a party of ingenious loyalist youths from sawing off his steeple, and was in daily expectation of being kidnapped by the rebels. "Thus am I," wrote the worthy divine, "between two fires—or, like the ancient Britons, tossed between the sea and the barbarians."

New York itself, however, was not a cheerful place at this time. The Broadway was still encumbered with ruined and deserted houses. Trinity Church was a blackened heap. The

soldiers were disorderly ; they had even broken open the City Hall, and plundered the College Library. Then, too, the knowledge that there were so many wretched prisoners in the Sugar House and the Provost's, was not enlivening, especially as some of those from Philadelphia were known to Mrs. Maverick—who often carried them relief.

As winter came on, Sir William Howe gave occasional entertainments (at which Mrs. Loring appeared as conspicuously as in Boston) ; but many of the inhabitants of the city had fled before the British took possession, or had obtained passes soon afterwards ; and those who were left had no great reason to feel merry. Such of them as had estates on Long Island, or the mainland, complained bitterly that the British foraging parties showed no respect of persons, but seized on any cattle or horses they came across—never so much as asking them if they were rebel beasts. Moreover, insult was added to injury—the remonstrating owners were bidden go carry their complaints to a remote and torrid region of the universe, which it is a gross incivility to mention in respectable ears.

There should have been—and doubtless was—much consolation in the fact that the rebel cause was growing more hopeless every day—until it seemed that Sir William Howe had only to bring down his hand and crush it at a blow, as one crushes a hornet (sometimes, it is true, getting stung for one's pains). After Fort Washington was taken, even Mrs. Maverick pitied the rebels—that is, she pitied the unhappy prisoners whom she saw being marched through the streets of New York, on their way to the jails. As for Sam Adams, John Hancock, Mr. Washington, and the other leaders, who had brought them to this, Mrs. Maverick declared herself capable of sitting unmoved to see them either hanged or beheaded, as His Majesty might command.

Captain Digby had made acquaintance with a Captain Graydon of Philadelphia, who was one of the prisoners taken at Fort Washington. The acquaintance began by Lieutenant Beckett (a good-natured fellow, who had been very kind to the luckless prisoners) saying to Fred one day—when he had ridden out to the prisoners' temporary quarters—that he was sorry for these poor devils, and pointing out Graydon as a particular object of compassion—he being terribly anxious about his brother, who had, he feared, fallen at Fort Washington. A few days after the prisoners were marched into New York,

Fred came upon Graydon, not far from the battery (by Judge Jones's house), and was talking to him, when they heard—what was heard pretty often about that time—the buglers amusing themselves by giving the view-halloo. This was intended for the rebels across the water, and was considered an exquisite jest. It brought tears of mortification to poor Graydon's eyes. Digby pretended not to see them, and began to ask all sorts of questions, with the charitable design of diverting his attention—and in the course of his questions discovered that his rebel acquaintance could give him some very interesting information. From Graydon he learned that Miss Fleming was in Philadelphia. Graydon added that he had seen the young lady with her cousin, Colonel Fleming, about the time of the Declaration of Independence—a detail at which Fred's countenance fell considerably—and further remarked that he had heard that General Washington had a particular regard for the Colonel, who had shown great gallantry at Bunker's Hill, and had a cool steady head, to be depended upon at an emergency.

"These particulars can hardly be expected to concern you," observed Mr. Graydon; "but you seemed to take some interest in the family—and I rather fancied it might be a match between Colonel Fleming and Miss Mary."

"Did you—that is, had you any particular reason for thinking so?" asks Fred, with an attempt at carelessness.

"Only that she is a very charming girl, and he is a young man any girl might be proud of," returns Graydon—who, being safely engaged to the object of his own affections, can afford to be generous. "And 'twas evident they was on very familiar terms."

"The devil it was!—I mean, could you really see that?"

"I don't mean that they was foolish—only cousinly—they are cousins, you know," returns Graydon, a little surprised at Captain Digby's showing so much feeling on the subject.

From the upper windows of the house in Bowery Lane there was a view over the hills of Long Island, and Althea sometimes stole up to a certain window at the end of the upper corridor, and looking out towards Flatlands, wondered whether Jasper Fleming was among the prisoners who were there on parole. Looking out of window is proverbially an unprofitable employment; and Althea used to come down in not the best of humours.

She went dutifully with her aunt to visit the prisoners—but always with a sickening dread of seeing a face she knew. By this time she shared the opinion of Mr. Justice Jones as to the conduct of the war; and although the exploits of rebel marauders, privateers, whaleboats, and skimmers, sufficiently kept alive her prejudices against the rebels, she was often heartily disgusted at even so much of the Provost-Marshall's brutality as he permitted himself to show before ladies. This was sometimes, however,—when he had begun at the punch-bowl earlier in the day than usual,—not much disguised. Althea did not know the secrets of those prison-houses till years afterwards—nor the hideous stories of prisoners poisoned, that the Provost-Marshall might go on drawing their rations as if they were still alive—but she saw enough to make her loathe Cunningham; but party feeling was by this time risen to a madness which only civil war can excite, and which confused the judgements of persons who knew more of both sides than Althea Digby could possibly have known.

Althea's natural delicacy was offended by much that she saw that winter. Mrs. Loring flaunting it at the State-balls, was not a decorous spectacle; and old General Robertson appeared to her an odious old man. He had been presented to her at one of the balls, and was vastly smitten. He was always calling, and would squeeze her hand, and ogle her—as only such old men can—until she declared that next time he came, she would go up to her own room and stay there till he was gone.

General Robertson had a “lady,” as everybody knew—a certain Mrs. Carroll, at whose house some of the rebel prisoners, among them Mr. Graydon, were lodged. For the old General (a Scotsman by birth, and who had risen from the ranks) combined business with his pleasures. He was making a very pretty fortune out of his “Robertsons,” as the rebels called the guineas, moidores, and six-and-thirtieths, which had passed through his hands—and which might be known by the holes he punched out of them. As he also clipped the half-joes, these coins too were called by his honoured name. This venerable old gentleman, now nearly eighty, had been made Governor of the city, in place of Governor Tryon, to the unspeakable disgust of Mr. Justice Jones.

It was not until December—by which time some, at least,

of the rebels were beginning to think it might be as well to have a friend at Court in time of need—that the Justice was released on parole, and returned to New York. He soon found out the ladies—and it may be imagined whether he spoke charitably of the rebels now! But he soon saw things in New York, which put him in a still more towering rage with those who made the King's name and authority a cover for speculation and rapine.

He came in one day, soon after his return, with a pretty thick book under his arm.

"How do you do, Judge?" says Mrs. Maverick, holding out her hand, as she sat behind her tea-pot. It was easy to see that Mr. Jones was even more peppery than usual.

"Do, Ma'am!" he cries, bristling with wrath. "Very ill, Ma'am! Infernally ill, saving your presence! I'm ashamed to say it, but 'tis the truth, and damn it! it shall be said! The King's troops did more mischief the first week they were here than the rebels—confound 'em—did in seven months! They only took a telescope for Mr. Washington's own use; and the King's troops have stole forty thousand volumes out of the College Library! I saw a villain yesterday hawking about some volumes of the *Annual Register*, neatly bound and lettered on the backs, and selling 'em for a dram!"

"'Tis a shameful thing, to be sure!" says Mrs. Maverick, much concerned.

"Ma'am, 'tis infamous! And this very afternoon, coming along to wait upon you, I saw an infernal scoundrel offering *Coke upon Littleton* for one-and-sixpence! One-and-sixpence, Ma'am, for a fine copy of *Coke upon Littleton*, stole out of the town library by these pretty fellows sent hither to restore order! Ma'am, when I think how we loyalists are treated, I am like to burst with rage! My cows and horses on Long Island have been taken. My loyal neighbours have had their fat cattle and wagons seized, just as if they was rebels. My friend Dr. Tredwell's horse—a descendant, Ma'am, of the famous Wildair, of the true English breed, and worth a hundred and fifty guineas—was pounced upon t'other morning by the Colonel of the 17th Dragoons. 'Get off that horse, in the King's name!' says this precious specimen. 'I am a loyalist,' says the Doctor. 'No matter; get off, in the King's name,' says my fine gentleman. 'I want that horse, and, by George, I'll have him!' and when the Doctor remonstrates, the

jackanapes tells him to take the saddle home on his back, and be damned to him, and thank his stars that he don't take the saddle too! And calls him a rebel, and threatens him with the Provost if he says any more!"

To this Mrs. Maverick replies by relating the woes of Jacobus Quackenboss—who, having after infinite pains found his horses, presented his memorandum. "But they only hove it at his head—'tis the very word the poor man used—and I never saw any one more cut-up in my life," says the old lady. "I call it a shameful thing—and very impolitic too."

"Ma'am, they're all traitors together," cries the Judge, clutching *Coke upon Littleton* and shaking it at Mrs. Maverick. "They're all in a league together, every one of 'em! I believe on my soul, that there's a set plan to betray His Majesty—a plan to enrich themselves and let these Provinces be lost! Howe is a traitor!"

"Come, come, Judge; this is going too far," exclaims Mrs. Maverick, a little scared at such words.

"I don't say his brother is. Black Dick, as the sailors call him, is, I think, an honest man. But Sir William—dallying with loose women, neglecting the best opportunities, and robbing His Majesty's loyal adherents—I say he's a traitor, and we are being bought and sold by him!"

The winter would have been dull indeed but for the presence in the city of a very accomplished young officer, a Captain in the Fusileers, named André, who became exceedingly intimate with Mrs. Maverick and the Digbys, and was always dropping in and enlivening them with his witty conversation.

Captain André—or Jack, as his friends called him—was a young man of Swiss extraction, who had begun life in commerce. He had fallen in love with a young relative of Miss Anna Seward, the poetess, who was also a connection of his own; but the course of true love ran cross. Jack André was an amiable and agreeable young man enough, but he had neither fortune, connections, nor expectations, so the lady's friends opposed the marriage. She wept and protested, but she yielded at last, and allowed her family to marry her to Mr. Richard Edgeworth—a young widower of six-and-twenty, of almost as lively and ingenious a turn of mind as his rival.

Having been so unlucky in love, Jack André determined to see if he could not be more lucky in war. Ambition woke up in

him, and whispered that glory was still left, even if love's labour was lost. He threw up his clerkship, and entered the army—where his charming manners and versatile genius quickly made him friends. There was nothing he could not turn his hand to, from a lampoon to a lady's fancy dress, and he was an authority on all matters of taste. With all this he was also a smart and intelligent officer, and men liked him as much as women admired him.

Everybody knew that Jack André's heart was broken ; he still carried his lost Honora's portrait about with him, but he by no means therefore shunned the society of the ladies—who for their part did their best to comfort him. But, indeed, no one could resist the young fellow. There was a boyish impulsiveness about him which disarmed every one, always excepting his Honora's parents and guardians ; but, as we all know, parents and guardians sometimes have millstones instead of hearts. Even in America, he had not been without his adventures. He was taken prisoner in Canada, and carried south to Lancaster—where, as usual, he won the affections of every one who had to do with him. He sketched the house in which he was quartered ; he made the most graceful and spirited pen-and-ink portraits of the family ; and when he was exchanged, there was a general lamentation.

In person Captain André was slight, and scarcely reached the middle height. His features, without being regularly handsome, were decidedly pleasing ; and a pair of ingenuous blue eyes, full of vivacity and sensibility, betrayed his feelings before he uttered them. He looked even younger than he was, and the charm of his conversation was all the more irresistible from the singular union of so boyish a face with so accomplished a mind and so polished a manner. There was nothing of the forlorn lover of tragedy about him—it required, indeed, some stretch of imagination to believe that so light-hearted a being could be the victim of blighted affection. But to doubt this, would have been to wrong Jack André. His passion for his Honora had been a true one, and if he hovered round other shrines now that she was lost to him, who could blame him ? Was he to be accounted incapable of deep suffering, because his complexion was not a fine olive-green, and his general aspect that of a Calabrian brigand ? Jack André's character had nothing tragic in it by nature, but he had had a great passion nevertheless. The women who allowed him to flirt with them, knew

well enough that he would never love again as he had loved—from which it will appear how eminently disinterested was the interest which they took in him. Being thus naturally sanguine and impulsive, it was but a law of nature that he should believe himself to be a deeply-tragic person—and being as transparent as the day, that he should be convinced he had a prodigious aptitude for intrigue and diplomacy.

He had his young brother with him—a mere boy—he himself was not much more than five-and-twenty; but he told Miss Digby that he had several sisters who came between them in age.

This ingenious young gentleman had conceived a huge admiration for Althea Digby. He had confided his sorrows to her ear, and she had listened very patiently. He had shown her his Honora's portrait—a pretty miniature taken by himself; and he told her how, when he was made prisoner at St. John's by General Montgomery (a little before Arnold's attempt on Quebec), he had concealed this portrait in his mouth, lest it should fall into the hands of his captors. He sighed deeply as he told all this, and it was evident that he had suffered much—although he went on to speak of the Phoenix, and to beg Miss Digby's opinion as to that classic fowl's peculiarities, and especially as to its alleged power of rising renewed out of its own ashes. Here, however, Althea gently withdrew her hand (which the Captain had respectfully kissed out of gratitude for some words of womanly sympathy which she had just uttered), and remarked that, although no one could justly blame a man for transferring his affections from a woman who did not return them, yet that, in a case like this, it was difficult to see how either of the parties could hope for happiness.

"For I will not suppose either of you so fickle as to be able soon to forget each other," she added, leaning back in her chair, and looking full in Jack André's face, as she took up the netting which she had laid down for a moment.

"Heaven knows I have remembered her too long for my own peace of mind!" cried Captain André, ruefully contemplating his ruffles, to avoid meeting Miss Digby's steady glance. But she was inexorable.

"Nay, I hope you are not going to abuse your own constancy," she said, smiling but determined.

"In the past, no; but for the future—'twere folly, if not indeed sin, to continue to cherish feelings towards her which it were now a sin in her to return."

"I protest, Captain André, I did not know you was so moral," said Althea, rather sarcastically.

He flushed to the roots of his hair. "Do you take me for a profligate?" he cried, the tears almost in his eyes. "My love was ever honourable—and sooner than disturb her peace of mind, I would consent to be banished to the ends of the earth!"

"Nay, you are there already," observed Althea, with a malicious curl of her lips.

"I know you detest this country," he said; "but so do not I. There are honest people here—even among our adversaries. When I was a prisoner at Lancaster, I learned to much respect some of 'em. I would be banished to a worse place than this, sooner than show my constancy as you seem disposed to have me do."

"You mistake me," said Althea kindly and gravely. "I never meant to say that you should pursue the lady, now that she has become the wife of another. It only seemed to me that you was too eager to give a plausible name to mere natural weariness of a hopeless passion."

"And what then?" asked André, with a good deal of warmth. He had been standing by the window, but he now came and sat down near Althea. "What then? What if a heart—wearied with long hoping and fearing, and thrown back at last on itself—seeks to ease its burden, and looks round for some kind heart on which to lean? God forbid I should blame her—I know what it cost her; but if 'tis so great a sin to be inconstant, who was inconstant first? There are some men who deny their past loves, and protest for the hundredth time that they never loved before. I am more honest; I never yet loved but once, and I confess it. Yet surely, in time, the deepest wound may heal, and a man may love again?"

"Or desire to be loved," said Althea, with a swift piercing glance at him.

"Well, even that is a way of loving," he said. "You are cruel! You have never known what 'tis to love, or you would know what 'tis to desire to be loved."

He looked so ingenuous as he said this, and his blue eyes were so sweet and beseeching, that Althea relented.

"You know you have my sincere sympathy," she said kindly. "Tis as you say—only time can heal such wounds. As yet, you still see the shadow of your Honora come between you and every woman you talk with. It may seem cruel to

say, forget her—yet I must needs own it would be better you did not remember her so often.”

Althea smiled as she said this, and André smiled too ; but his smile only lasted an instant. A doubtful expression took its place on his countenance. Once or twice he made as though he would speak. At last he rose abruptly and went to the window, and stood there looking out—and he had not turned when Fred came in, and no more could be said.

CHAPTER XLI.

A BOLD STROKE.

On Christmas Day in 'Seventy-six,
Our ragged troops with bayonets fix'd
For Trenton march'd away.

THE BATTLE OF TRENTON.

THE Battle of Long Island was but the first of a long train of reverses, of which the loss of Fort Washington was probably, considered in its moral effect, the heaviest blow of all. After this, the Continental army doubted itself, and all the old contempt for Continental courage revived among the King's troops—for it was many a long year before it was known that Fort Washington had been betrayed.

Then came retreat after retreat, with an ever-diminishing army—from Harlem to White Plains, from White Plains to Northcastle, then across the Hackensack to Newark, then to New Brunswick, then to Trenton—and always closely pursued by Cornwallis. There were many who would have had the Commander-in-Chief fight instead of retreat ; but he knew better than to risk his raw levies, where defeat must be ruin.

Many of these zealous persons accused Washington (but under their breath) of want of enterprise, and thought that General Lee would soon alter the face of affairs, if he were in command. In this opinion, General Lee heartily agreed—and, after the loss of Fort Washington, found it impossible to conceal that he did so. He had been sent with his division into New Jersey in order to cover Philadelphia, and when Washington desired him to come to his assistance, he made one excuse after another, and did not move for three weeks, in spite of repeated and urgent messages—keeping up a

brisk correspondence meanwhile with Joseph Reed, Washington's secretary and intimate friend, in which they mutually deplored the vacillation and feebleness of their chief.

Joseph Reed had come very near to despair of the republic. When, after the fall of Fort Washington, he was sent to New Jersey for help, he found the legislature of that State fleeing from place to place, and the militia positively refusing to serve after their term should be expired. When, therefore, on his return he heard that Sir William Howe had issued a proclamation, giving the rebels sixty days in which to come in and receive a full pardon for their offences, he began to fear the game was played out.

General Lee had long been meditating some bold stroke which should let the Provincials see what real generalship was, and snuff out General Washington's flickering candle once for all. He had had thoughts of surprising Rodgers the Renegade—who lay with his rangers in an exposed situation in New Jersey—but on mature consideration, he decided that he could distinguish himself more brilliantly on the other side of the Delaware. It would never do to hide his light longer under a bushel. Though most people turned to himself as the hope of the country, General Gates had insinuated the belief into a good many minds that *he* too was an abler commander than Washington. Lee seldom took the trouble to insinuate, having found by experience that there is nothing like bold self-assertion; and he intended to support assertion by deeds.

At last he moved on to Morristown. His march was very slow, and it was the 12th of December before he got as far as Chatham. There he left his army with Sullivan in command, and took up his quarters at a tavern at Baskenridge, to meditate more at leisure on his bold stroke—and where that evening a gentleman was making a disturbance about a missing horse.

Meanwhile, General Gates, also marching to Washington's aid, was detained by a heavy snow-storm in a valley near the Wallpeck, and sent on young Mr. Wilkinson, his brigade-major, with a letter to the Commander-in-Chief, to ask which road he should take. Hearing that General Lee was near Morristown, it occurs to Wilkinson that he will do as well; so, at four in the morning, he is brought up to the bedside of the General, who opens the letter after a decent demur, and desires Wilkinson to go down and lie before the fire.

The General is not very early of a morning; he does not come down till eight, and then comes half-dressed and slovenly, his open collar showing a shirt which looks as if it had been worn a month—he affects slovenliness, as a mark of greatness. Every one knows that he has received a most urgent letter from His Excellency to push on, but he is in no hurry—on the contrary, he questions Mr. Wilkinson, and makes sarcastic remarks on the operations, hinting pretty plainly that, as second in command, he means to follow his own judgment—and seems as though he will do anything, except go to breakfast.

As if to make a fresh delay, some of the Connecticut light-horse come up, outlandish enough in their full-bottomed wigs—in which they look like George the First on horseback. One wants his horse shod, another wants his pay, another wants forage——

“You have not mentioned the last want!” roars the General, making the crockery dance as he slaps his unwashed hand on the table. “You want to go home! and damn you, you shall!”

Whereupon, exeunt the Connecticut light-horsemen, sorely aggrieved and scandalised.

They have scarcely retired, when Sullivan, tired of waiting, sends for orders, and receives some, after a fashion. He is to go on, and the General will follow. But even after breakfast, Lee lingers—to write to Gates on the well-worn subject of General Washington’s deficiencies as a commander. He has just dashed off some crushing sentences, and signed his name to them, when young Wilkinson (who is looking out of the window) sees a party of British dragoons riding up the avenue.

Resistance is useless—has not the General said (on occasion of the Fast-day ordered by Congress) that Heaven favours strong battalions? Colonel Harcourt and his dragoons have taken care to be much the stronger. The gentleman who came last night about the horse, posted off to Brunswick to tell them what a prize was to be made. General Lee is hurried off in his dishabille—blanket-coat, slippers, and all; there is no time to lose lest a rescue should be attempted. Even greatness has its weak moments; at this distressing juncture—fallen thus ignominiously a victim to a bold stroke of the enemy—the ex-aide-de-camp of King Stanislaus turns pale, and even condescends to ask his life, as he is forced to mount Mr. Wilkinson’s horse, standing quite providentially before the door. Mr. Wilkinson,

meantime, having slipped away in the confusion, makes good his own escape, and—finding somebody else's horse—is off with the news and that unlucky letter to Sullivan.

This misfortune falls like a thunderbolt on Secretary Reed, who had pinned his last hope on Lee. He so far loses his head, as to express a wish to a friend that the devil had carried off Dickinson before he wrote the *Farmer's Letters*, and engaged the country in a contest above its strength. Dickinson himself is now, but unjustly, accused of having made his peace. The New York militia has deserted and gone home—and even some of the New England regiments have followed their example. The regiments which remain are utterly demoralised. The other day, a captain and fifty men fled from six wagoners in red coats, and the very name of a Hessian is enough to cause a panic. The army is, moreover, in want of everything—from woollens and linen, to salt and sugar. The only wonder is, why Howe has not crushed General Washington at one blow—as he might have done if he had attacked him on White Plains, instead of marching on Fort Washington. Philadelphia is threatened, and Congress have hastily adjourned to Baltimore. So dark is the prospect, that Washington himself has said to Reed that if things grow much worse they must retire to Augusta County in Virginia, and try a predatory war; and, if that fails, they must cross the Alleghanies. So the days go on, and Congress orders another day of fasting and humiliation, and people say despairingly to each other, that Heaven has withdrawn its favour from the cause of America.

When the ship is sinking, it is rather hard, for a mere point of honour, to be expected to go down with her. Much undeserved obloquy has been vented on rats for not staying to be drowned. Colonel Reed, in this dreadful situation, remarks to Cadwallader (who has been exchanged, and is with him at Bristol), that in these times a man with a family dependent on him must look to himself. Whereupon Cadwallader suspects his friend of intending to run, but keeps his own counsel—as much from fear of the terrible example, as from pity to human weakness. *Appropos* of weakness—immediately before Lee's capture, a letter came from him to Colonel Reed—then just returned from his fruitless errand to the Jerseys—and His Excellency, as was usual, opened it, supposing it to be on public business. But at the first sentence he read; "*I lament with*

you that fatal indecision of mind which in war is a much greater disqualification than stupidity, or even want of personal courage——" with more to the same effect, together with acknowledgments of Colonel Reed's flattering expressions towards himself. This letter His Excellency sends on to the Colonel to Burlington, with an apology for having opened it; on which Reed calls Heaven to witness that he has never said or written a word derogatory to his Commander, and only prays that General Lee may be speedily exchanged, in order that His Excellency may see how harmless was the letter to which this was an answer.

It is a dark hour for Washington. The sixty days are running out, and many a man is looking at his neighbour, and wondering what he is going to do—or what he would say, if he knew what he himself was thinking of doing.

* * * *

But before the sixty days were out, Fortune turned her wheel once more—or rather, General Washington, tired of waiting, turned it for her. He, too, saw that a bold stroke must be struck, and his plan was bold enough to satisfy General Lee himself. He had determined to attempt the surprise of Trenton, held by Colonel Rahl and a strong force of the terrible Hessians. But Trenton was on the other side of the Delaware, and the stroke must be struck before the river was frozen over.

So on the evening of Christmas Day he set out from camp with two thousand five hundred men, and came down to M'Konkey's ferry at twilight. There was snow in the wind, and on the ground. The Delaware was swollen, and the blocks of ice rushed swirling down with the current. It seemed to Jasper Fleming, as he waited on the brink, that this was the river of death, running black and fierce. But they must cross it—there was no other way.

His Excellency, with his riding-whip in his hand, was in the ferry parlour. Jasper could see his tall figure passing every now and then between the window and the table, on which stood a single candle, while his horse champed his bit outside. Just at this moment, a horseman comes trotting up, and a voice—which Jasper recognises as Mr. Wilkinson's—asks hastily where His Excellency may be found?

"He is in the parlour," says Jasper, advancing. "I thought you was in Philadelphia?"

"So I was this morning," replies Wilkinson, dismounting. "I've a letter to His Excellency, from General Gates."

As he goes in, Jasper, standing just outside the window, hears His Excellency say,—“What a time is this to hand me letters!”

Then he hears Wilkinson's brisk young voice replying; and presently catches the word “Philadelphia,” and hears His Excellency repeat, in the same tone of solemn reproach and indignation,—“On his way to Congress!”

“Dear me—beg your pardon, Colonel Fleming, I'm sure—didn't see you, coming suddenly out of the light,” exclaims Wilkinson, who has run into Colonel Fleming's arms, and would have fallen on the slippery stones, if the Colonel had not promptly caught him. “How dark it has grown!”

“Dark enough to make the venture,” says Jasper. “If you ever say your prayers, Major Wilkinson, now's the time, for I think the future of this country hangs on to-night.”

“God grant you succeed!” cries Wilkinson. “But was ever an army so ill-found? I traced you here by your bloody footsteps in the snow.”

“Who will lead us over?” cries His Excellency, coming down to the water's edge. Colonel Glover and the Marble-head fishermen are there to do it. They might be a regiment of seals, for their indifference to water, but work as they may, they cannot get the artillery over before four in the morning.

As the troops crossed the river, the sleet and snow drove in their teeth, and the night was as dark as their hopes. The light of the lantern in the prow fell on Washington's face—set like iron.

“This is the Rubicon with a vengeance!” whispered a voice in Jasper's ear, and turning, he saw the fair boyish face of Alexander Hamilton.

“This work is too rough for you,” he said involuntarily, as he contrasted Hamilton's small slight form with the stalwart figures around him. “And your head is too valuable a one to be risked without necessity.”

“I mean to run worse risks than this before I die,” said Hamilton. “Look at His Excellency—he means to do or die, and I think he will *do*.”

“I bade young Wilkinson pray for our success,” whispered Jasper in Hamilton's ear. “But I think I had better have told

him to pray that his master Gates may not wriggle himself into Washington's place, while we are away on this errand."

They were to march in two divisions—one on the upper and one on the lower road. The second division, under Sullivan, was to halt at the cross-roads leading to Howland's ferry. It was a nine miles' march; the roads were slippery and the men half-clad, but they marched on manfully—up hill and down—amidst sleet and hail. Part of the way led through forests of hickory and black oak, whose boughs sheltered them a little from the violence of the wind; but more than once Jasper was obliged to get off and lead his horse, so deep were the ruts, and so much was the poor beast distressed by the hailstones. The cold gray dawn broke before they saw the roofs of Trenton, where Colonel Rahl and his Hessians lay. They can scarcely hope to effect a surprise by broad daylight.

"Sir, we are at the cross-roads, but General Sullivan desires me to inform your Excellency that his arms are wet," says an aide-de-camp, trotting up at this moment.

"Then tell your General to use the bayonet," replies His Excellency sternly. "The town *must* be taken." And so they went on along the snowy road in the gray December morning. They were close to the village, but the snow lay deep, the Hessians slept heavily, and no alarm was given until they were fairly in the street. Now Colonel Rahl loved music and deep potations—as a good German should—yet perhaps, as a commander stationed so near the enemy, rather too well than wisely. He had vexed the military soul of one of his lieutenants, by neglecting the weightier matters of drill and defence, in his anxiety that the hautboys should play up bravely. He delighted to make his men march round the church to martial strains; but he had laughed at a proposal to throw up some earth-works—and when the old veteran Von Dechow had respectfully urged that at least it could do no harm, he had made a boastful joke, which may be best described as mediæval.

The Herr Colonel had yesterday received a warning that he was to be attacked by Lord Stirling, and had been on the alert; but it so happened that last night, in the twilight, one of his pickets was fired on by a party which instantly fell back into the woods; so the Colonel concluded that this was the attack, and went home to bed—having some wassail-cups to sleep off. But at eight o'clock in the morning, a very different alarm was given.

That same disapproving lieutenant was in command of the

picket, just at the top of King Street. Hearing a slight commotion, he popped his head out of the door, and saw the enemy's advance-guard with the artillery behind filling the street. "*Der Feind! Der Feind! Heraus! Heraus!*" shouts the lieutenant; and in another instant they hear firing at the lower end of the town, and in a moment more the cold frosty air is full of the noise of war—bugles sounding an alarm—drums beating to arms—dragoons galloping hither and thither—shots from windows—shouts of officers trying to form their bewildered men; while Washington rides up the street beside Forest's artillery, which is just ready to open fire. "Sir," says Jasper, "your position is too exposed. No success could make up for any accident happening to you." But His Excellency's blood is up, and he will not listen. The enemy are getting two field-pieces in position across King Street—but Captain Washington and Lieutenant Munroe with the advance make a brave rush, and take the pieces before they can be fired. The Herr Colonel is by this time on horseback, drawing his men together—he has actually got them safe out of the town. But his evil genius suggests to him that one wild dash may recover all, and save both honour and baggage. So he gallops back into the town, now in full possession of the enemy. There is a wild charge—and then the Colonel falls from his horse, and the Hessians, seeing his fall, break in dismay and try to flee.

As Jasper returns from carrying a message to Sullivan, he sees the luckless Colonel, supported by a file of sergeants, presenting his sword to His Excellency, and knows that the bold stroke is accomplished.

* * * * *

The elephants of King Pyrrhus were not more monstrous in the eyes of the Romans than were the Hessians to the rebel Provinces. They ate babies; they drank the blood of their enemies. Mothers frightened their naughty children with their name. And now more than seven hundred of these wild beasts were marched prisoners into Newtown, and discovered to be but men after all. They wore towering brass-fronted caps, and bristled with brass all over. They blacked their shoes and their moustaches out of the same gallipot; their queues reached their waists; altogether they looked terrible fellows. But the spell was broken, the day that their blue coats and yellow breeches were seen coming down Newtown Street.

By the spring, Washington had recovered the Jerseys with-

out a pitched battle ; and though as spring came on, the clouds began to gather in the north, and faction lifted up her head in Congress, the tide had turned,—there was never any more talk of retiring behind the Alleghanies.

CHAPTER XLII.

PHILADELPHIA.

THERE are always some dull pauses in the midst of the most exciting times — pauses long enough for the acuteness of suspense to become blunted, and for the more prosaic part of the evils of war and tumult to be felt. In Philadelphia, even the presence of Congress could hardly keep the town alive, in the stagnation of business caused by the interruption of communication. Occasional rumours of dissensions in Congress (who sat with closed doors, and admitted no reporters), and more disquieting rumours from the seat of war, could not prevent the town from being extremely dull. Most of the young men were gone to the war—many, alas ! slain, or prisoners in New York, or in the prison-ships off Jersey—for there was scarcely a family on the side of the Provincials which had not to lament some member killed or taken at the surrender of Fort Washington. Then came the gloomy day when the members of Congress departed for Baltimore, and seemed to leave the city to its fate.

Mrs. Braxholm and Mary had endured their full share of suspense throughout the winter. General Braxholm, with his brigade of mounted rifles, was chiefly engaged in repressing the raids of the loyalists of Long Island—who were beginning to establish a regular system of rapine. It had become a recognised method of plunder, to carry off a substantial citizen in a midnight raid, and hold him to ransom. The other side naturally tried reprisals, so there were occasional exchanges of captives. In such a state of things, cattle-lifting and housebreaking were mere matters of course. No one who had the misfortune to live on Long Island, or in any of the districts around New York, could go to bed, without a reasonable probability of being awakened by Fagan and his men, or some other marauder of the same kidney, having his house stripped, and being himself carried off to New York, until he should have paid a round ransom.

Philadelphia was as yet too far from the seat of war to be subject to such plagues as these. As yet, Washington and his army lay between her and the enemy; and the piratical whale-boats, which infested the Sound and the Hudson River, dared not try the waters of the Delaware. But the dark cloud of war shut in her horizon for all that, and the air was heavy with disquiet. Many of the leading citizens were known to disapprove of the resort to arms—there were whispers of plots—and every now and then the decorous Quaker city saw the unseemly spectacle of the tarring and feathering of some obnoxious loyalist.

To Mary Fleming, born and bred in Boston, Philadelphia had a strangely sleepy and old-world air. Fashion—time itself seemed almost to have stood still there. There were no steep streets and crooked alleys as in Boston; all here was laid out with the right angular precision of Quaker morality. The fair broad streets, with their avenues of trees, gave a sense of leisure unknown to the busy thoroughfares of Boston. Mary said that, after the narrow streets of Boston, Philadelphia seemed to her like a house without walls.

Mary had been awakened early that morning by the long-winding of a cow-horn. Before the Revolution, this was the reveille of the citizens of Philadelphia. The cow-herd blew his horn in Dock Street, and the people let out their cows,—who knew the sound,—and when they were all gathered, he led them to the common pasture. In the evening, he went for them, and brought them back—blowing his horn as the signal for the housekeepers to open their gates. Then he blew again, and every cow came home to her own door, as some of us have seen them do in villages of the Bavarian Highlands to this day.

Mrs. Branzholm's rooms possessed the lately-introduced luxury of wall-papers—an experiment to which the landlady had brought her mind only after great searchings of heart. That the paper would harbour dust, and the paste turn mouldy, were the private convictions of that estimable person. But the Slate-Roof House had a character to maintain, and she had been assured by Mrs. Franklin (whom she had happened to meet in a drapery store, while her mind still trembled in the balance) that wall-papers would soon be all the rage—Dr. Franklin had said so, founding his opinion on the love of womankind for gay colours and change.

The new wall-paper exhibited a choice collection of classic

vases, from which depended festoons of elegant pale-puce flowers. Against this unwonted background, stood the heavy Spanish mahogany furniture, which had already served two generations, and was to serve at least three more. In those days (which in the Colonies answered to a period full fifty years earlier in England), respectable people were no more ashamed of inheriting their father's tables and chairs, than of bearing their names, or of following their opinions. In England, long before this, great progress had been made, and fine young gentlemen, who had gone on the grand tour, tried almost as hard to make themselves into French gallants as the frog did to swell herself into an ox; and to be old-fashioned was to have committed the one unpardonable crime. A man might be guilty of all the seven deadly sins, and yet be admitted to repentance in a coat of the latest mode—but the door of mercy was inexorably shut against an unfashionable sinner. In Philadelphia, however, before the revolution, it was not thus—perhaps because the shade of William Penn still haunted the streets of his city—or, perhaps, because Paris was so far away. Instead of wearing two or three watches at once, like modish gentlemen at home, the citizens of Philadelphia so often wore none at all, that it was quite a recognised custom to step into a watchmaker's and ask the time of day—until Mr. Duffield put up a public clock.

But fashion lies deep in the heart of man—even in Philadelphia, the boatmen went about with their hair tied up in eelskins, to make it grow into a toupee. Many gentlemen had laid aside their wigs since Braddock's men came back from Fort Duquesne in their own hair; and many more had done so since the King of England had cast away his own peruke. For all this, however, Philadelphia was half a century behind-hand (at the very least) in the arts of genteel dissipation. There was not even a public promenade; it had not yet occurred to the Pennsylvanians to go out except on business. But there was plenty of homely sociality; and in summer the ladies dressed up of an evening, and sat in their doorways, or went from porch to porch gossiping with their neighbours. They rode, too, in neat little jockey-caps, or drove in one-horse chairs, with leathern bands for springs.

Indoors and out, there was the same substantial simplicity. Mrs. Branzholm's sitting-room had no carpet, but the boards were as white as the silver-sand they were sprinkled with, and

which Deborah, the hired woman, swept into figures with her brush. The chimney-place was in a corner; it was one of Dr. Franklin's "Pennsylvanians," and bore the appropriate device of a friendly-faced sun, with the motto, *ALTER IDEM*. A little above the stove, and set across the corner of the room, hung a fine mirror, in a scalloped mahogany frame, further embellished by a festoon of flowers painted on the glass itself. It had a shelf in front of it—on which Althea's hand-screens enjoyed the post of honour. This arrangement was Mrs. Branhholm's own doing, suggested by a mantel-shelf which she had seen in Boston, and was one of the innovations which her landlady had resisted. She had, however, handsomely owned that the effect was elegant, and gave the room quite a new air.

If the town was dull, what society there was in the Slate-Roof House was of the best. Mr. Rittenhouse (lately appointed State-treasurer) would drop in pretty often. He was very partial to Mary, and spent a deal of pains in explaining to her how he calculated the exact size of the moulds for his clock-weights—for he had been charged with replacing with iron the leaden weights for which Congress had found another use.

One morning, however, Mr. Rittenhouse came near receiving a warmer welcome from Mary than he expected. He was coming along—rather earlier in the day than he usually went abroad—and being somewhat lost in meditation, did not observe until he was actually in front of the door-steps that half-a-dozen boys and girls were gathered round the porch of the Slate-Roof House, where Mary Fleming, her face crimson with anger, was holding up an egg to the general view.

"This is a wicked attempt to frighten silly people; there's no magic in it—'tis a trick!" Mary was saying indignantly, as she looked round on her audience, who seemed rather awed—but whether by her eloquence, or by the trick she was denouncing, was not apparent. "I have heard of these eggs, and I'll serve every one I see as I serve this one—and not pay for it, neither!" With this, Mary dashed the egg into the middle of the road—with so swift and unexpected a movement, that Mr. Rittenhouse very nearly received it into his own bosom, as he came up the steps to see what might be the matter.

"I scarce expected, Miss Mary, to be pelted by you with rotten eggs," he observes, bowing politely—while the boys laugh (out of pure respect, as Jasper said, when this story was told him).

"'Tis not rotten that I know of, sir," stammers Mary in great confusion. "But indeed I am so ashamed, I do not know what to say to you—only I was so put out; and so I think will you be when you know why I did it. 'Tis what they call a magic egg——"

Mr. Rittenhouse now perceived a great girl with a basket of eggs on her arm.

"Magic egg or no, Humpty-dumpty hath had a great fall," he observed, quietly stepping into the road, and turning over with his cane the shattered remains of Humpty-dumpty, as he lay in the dust. Some letters were faintly visible on the broken shell—"O America, Howe shall be thy conqueror!" says Mr. Rittenhouse slowly reading the inscription. "It looked so indeed three weeks ago, but now I think that Sir William Howe shall no more conquer America, than

All the King's horses and all the King's men
Shall put Humpty-dumpty together again.

Pray do not apologise, my dear Miss Mary—'twas a patriotic act, and I trust will be imitated. As for the magic, 'tis a very simple scientific secret, and could only impose on ignorance."

Mr. Rittenhouse said this rather severely, for the benefit of his hearers; and added—"Go home, and tell your mothers that I could in an hour write, '*O America, Washington shall be thy deliverer,*' on a score of such eggs."

Dulness and safety are frequently supposed to be convertible terms; but though Philadelphia was undoubtedly dull, its safety was threatened pretty often from without, while within, as every one knew, the great body of the Quakers inclined strongly to the royal cause, as to the Powers that Were. They did not always confine their opposition to the sort whereof it is said, "he that is not with me is against me"—but were known to give aid and comfort to the enemy in many ways, more or less direct—even if they did not, as was suspected, positively plot to restore the old order.

There was a brief flash of rejoicing when the Hessians were marched through, and poor Colonel Rahl's colours were hung up in Carpenter's Hall. But not even this could give much hope to the New Year, with Congress fled away, and every now and then an alarm of Howe's approach—the militia ordered out, shops to be shut, and people packing up their bedding and clothes in wagons, ready to start for the mountains.

The New Year was but a fortnight old, when the body of General Mercer (slain at Princetown) was brought in, to be buried at Christ Church with the honours of war. There were many such solemn spectacles after this, and one rainy day young Ensign Morris was laid to rest in the Friends' burying-ground,—but with no volley from weapons of carnal warfare breaking the sacred stillness.

Rumours that New York was taken—Tory prisoners brought in—backwoodsmen marching through to join the army—more funerals—so the winter wore away.

The very excitements in Philadelphia that winter were gloomy—the last being the hanging of Molesworth, for trying, at the instigation of Ex-speaker Galloway, to corrupt three pilots of the town, and get them to bring the *Eagle* up the Delaware.

Beside this, two or three flying visits from General Branhholm and Jasper, and as many letters from Noel—now in New Jersey with General Arnold—were the only events of any vital importance to either Mrs. Branhholm or Mary Fleming, until spring was far on its way to summer.

CHAPTER XLIII.

A MAN BORN TO COMMAND.

Magisque magisque viri nunc gloria claret.

NOEL BRANKHOLM accompanied General Arnold on his visit to the camp on the Delaware, in December—not very long before the surprise of Trenton, and had the happiness of there seeing his brother, for the first time since the breaking out of the war. In the few days which he and Jasper spent together, there was no lack of subjects for conversation. If Jasper could possibly have entertained any doubt before as to the extent to which Noel's affections were engaged, he could have none now.

They were one day discussing the loss of New York, and all the disastrous consequences which had followed therefrom, when Noel said—with a somewhat heightened colour and an uneasy manner, which Jasper did not fail to notice—

“I suppose Miss Digby is there?”

“I suppose so,” said Jasper—and hesitated so long before

he could find anything more to reply, that Noel mistook his brevity for displeasure.

"You hurt me once, brother—the only time you ever did," he said, holding his head high, and meeting Jasper's gaze. "Do you remember hinting that Miss Digby might move me from my principles? I hope you do not think it now?"

"No—I do not think it now," replied Jasper in a constrained tone. Noel had introduced Miss Digby's name so suddenly, that he was taken unprepared.

"Ah! but you speak doubtingly—you wish it was otherwise! You wish 'twas any other woman in the world I had set my thoughts on!" cried Noel excitedly. "'Tis so—confess it!"

"If it were so—even if it were, 'tis not because I—that is, you have no right to suppose—I mean, I never gave you cause to imagine—you mistake me——"

Jasper stammered and hesitated more and more. To accept Noel's accusation was to seem to think Althea unworthy—to repel it too openly, might be to betray himself. But Noel had not the remotest suspicion of the truth.

"Dear brother, I understand you better than you can explain yourself," he said. "I'll even own my love is a misfortune—God knows 'tis so, for I can never hope 'twill have a happy conclusion. But we cannot control our hearts—that's a task beyond the power of all our philosophy, as you will, I doubt not, find out one day for yourself."

"I have learned it already," said Jasper—and even the unsuspecting Noel noticed an unwonted bitterness in his voice—"and, like much other wisdom, 'tis of very little use to its owner. But why do we talk thus, when we must part so soon, and may never meet again in this world? As you know, His Excellency means shortly to strike a blow somewhere, though no one as yet knows where, and wherever he goes I follow."

"There's a something about His Excellency which compels respect," said Noel, "and then he is a Virginian—but if he throws your life away in one of his unlucky engagements, I shall not forgive him. I could wish you had served under General Arnold"—

"If I have rightly understood your description of his campaigns," said Jasper drily, "I should but be exchanging the frying-pan for the fire."

Noel laughed. "'Tis true he does not choose the safest

roads," he said; "but if you had ever seen him fight you would think of him as I do. You have seen him and heard him speak—is he not a man born to command?"

"Yes, in action," returned Jasper. "He is a man of astonishing daring and resolution, quick to resolve, and bold—and cautious too—to carry out. But I think he is too thirsty for glory, and, though 'tis the least ignoble sort of self-seeking, 'tis self-seeking still. No one can have seen Washington—as I have—sober and unelated in success, patient and steadfast under defeat, without perceiving that the heart of a nation may safely trust in him. I'm ever reminded of those lines in Ennius—

'Unus homo nobis cunctando restituit rem;
Non ponebat enim rumores ante salutem'—

But I think the greatest men seem at first less great than they are; 'tis not till I compare Washington with others, and even with your own intrepid commander, that I see how great he is."

"That may be," observed Noel; "but if General Arnold had been here you had never lost New York."

Before they parted, Noel put his brother through a close examination as to all that had happened in Boston. Jasper answered these questions very fully, and frankly told his brother that although Miss Digby had shown him kindness which he could never either forget or repay, he feared she disliked him.

"'Tis all my fault if she does," cried Noel eagerly—"not that I believe it for an instant. But I talked so much of you, when we was at sea, that she's got an idea, I know, that I take all my opinions from you. 'Twas in vain I assured her I thought for myself. She as good as told me you had made a rebel of me, and she called you a fire-eater before she'd ever seen you."

"I can assure you I take that as a compliment," said Jasper, and his cheeks flushed. "I fancied she thought me rather a fellow who set the ball a-rolling, but himself escaped the full penalty of his sedition."

"She could not have thought that," said Noel. "But I see plainly how 'tis; you misunderstood her from the first—nay, I'm not reproaching you. She's unjust too—I admit it. She chooses to think me your tool; 'pon my word, I'd sooner she called me a fire-eater! But you say she always spoke kindly of me?"

"She never mentioned you without some kind expression or

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other, and she has spoke a hundred times of your rescue of her brother."

"She makes too much of that," said Noel. "I don't mean to say but in another instant he had been lost, but any one would have done the same. But sure, dear brother, you wasn't with her all those months without seeing what a noble creature she is?"

"Can you not understand that the perceiving that may bring more pain than pleasure, under our circumstances?" returned Jasper. "I am fast becoming an accomplished dissembler!" he thought to himself, as Noel exclaimed,—

"I understand it but too well, brother! Is not that precisely what I feel ten times more sharply than you possibly can? Well, whatever be the issue, I believe she will do us justice one day—'tis scarce to be expected she should yet."

A day or two after this, His Excellency ordered General Arnold to Rhode Island, to assist in rallying the militia, and Noel bade his brother farewell with many embraces, in which everything was forgotten but their love for each other.

Before General Arnold left camp, he had the satisfaction of getting his friend Captain Lamb exchanged. Lamb had been left for dead under the walls of Quebec, and had been a prisoner ever since. He was now empowered to raise a regiment of artillery, and, wanting funds, Arnold lent him a thousand pounds.

The surprise of Trenton and the recovery of the Jerseys seemed to Noel's sanguine temperament sure signs of final and speedy victory to the cause of the United Colonies. He doubted not that the retaking of New York City would soon follow, and pleased himself with the idea of presenting himself very shortly before Miss Digby, in the character of a modest and chivalrous victor.

He had by this time fresh reason to complain of his General's wrongs. His relentless enemy, Colonel Brown, having been refused a court-martial, had sent no less than thirteen charges against Arnold to General Gates, who treated Brown very coolly, and forwarded the papers to Congress. This persistent persecution roused the anger of Schuyler (himself a victim to the New England grudge against a New Yorker); and he had written to Gates, that it would be well to court-martial officers who abused their superiors—adding that General Arnold's impartiality and candour would always expose him to complaint.

The effect of Brown's accusations was soon seen. In February, Congress elected five Major-Generals, but Arnold's name was not among them. Washington was much annoyed, and vainly remonstrated against this injustice; and Arnold, deeply hurt, requested leave of absence to go to Philadelphia (to which place Congress had now returned), to demand an investigation of his conduct. He first, however, went home to New Haven, where his sister was taking charge of his children—his wife having died during his first Canadian campaign.

He was still at New Haven when, one day in April, Governor Tryon of New York, who had planned a sudden descent on Rhode Island, landed two thousand troops at the foot of Compo Hill. He burned the stores at Fairfield, and then went on to Danbury. Wooster and Silliman, the Generals in command of the Provincials, had hastily called a few militia, and marched with them through the night, guided by the flames of Danbury. They were not more than six hundred in all. Just as they came into Reading, Noel—riding a little in advance of his company, anxiously listening for any sound, and wishing that General Arnold were but there to lead them—heard the sharp trot of a horse approaching, which slackened presently, and the very voice which he had been longing to hear, called out,—

“Who goes there?”

“Friends!” cried Noel, spurring his horse up the street. “You are just in time, sir, we shall beat them now you are come!”

“That will depend a good deal on how many they are,” returned the General, not, however, displeased.

As the day dawned, the street of Ridgefield presented a strange and unwonted spectacle. General Arnold, with Silliman and the main body of the militia, were waiting there behind a barricade hastily thrown across the street—carts, logs, earth, and stones, anything that came to hand, had been used to block the road. On one side was a ledge of rocks, on the other, houses and barns. Five hundred of the militia of Ridgefield had come in during the night. Nine hundred men in all were waiting in Ridgefield street for Tryon, whose rear would be harassed by Wooster and his two hundred—Tryon, having done all the mischief he had intended, was retiring.

It was neither dark nor light. The chilly dawn wrapped

all the familiar surroundings in a dim gray mist—like the dimness which hangs between life and death—and the close-drawn blinds of the houses looked like eyes shut in death, to open no more.

And so they waited, in a light more dreary than darkness itself, until the heavy tramp of the advancing British column sounded hollow through the fog, and they heard the distant firing of Wooster's men in the rear.

The encounter was desperate; but numbers began to tell, and the heavy firing soon made a breach in the barricade. Still it would have gone hard with Tryon, if a platoon of General Agnew's infantry had not gained the ledge of rocks. Arnold was evidently the object of attack. The balls whistled round him—Noel expected every instant to see him fall. His horse was struck and began to plunge; but that personal prowess which had so often before dazzled Noel's imagination, kept the foe at bay by sheer dint of hard blows. Then there was a sudden rush, and Noel, hard-pressed himself, and swept to the side of the road, suddenly missed the General, and desperately fighting his way towards him, heard a voice cry,—“Surrender! you are my prisoner!”

At this Noel struck about him so madly that he found himself the next instant by the General's side, whose horse had sunk down dead under him, and at whose breast a Tory partisan was pointing his bayonet. Noel had but just time to wonder why he still kept the saddle, when Arnold said coolly, “Not yet!” and, drawing out a holster-pistol, fired and killed the Tory.

By this time Noel perceived that the General's foot was entangled in his stirrup, and helped him to get clear. There was a thickly-wooded swamp a little farther on, and here Arnold rallied his men, and hung on the British rear all the way back to Compo, where Lamb came up with his artillery. There was another smart encounter here, before the enemy could re-embark under cover of the fire from the ships, and the General lost another horse—having nearly persuaded the enemy that he bore a charmed life.

After this, Congress relented so far as to appoint him a Major-General, and presented him with a horse in the stead of the two killed at Ridgefield. But even by this tardy act of justice his late juniors still outranked him. In vain did Washington once more urge his claims upon Congress, and represent that

General Arnold would scarcely consent to act under the new Major-Generals—whom as senior Brigadier he had commanded but a few weeks ago. Arnold was obliged to soothe the injured pride of a soldier, by taking what comfort he could from the report of the Board of War, which (confirmed by Mr. Carroll's evidence) pronounced Brown's charges to be cruel and groundless.

His Excellency had offered General Arnold the command on the Hudson. Arnold, however, had resolved to go to Philadelphia and demand the restoration of his seniority, and the settlement of his accounts. He had carried on the campaign in Canada to a great extent at his own charges, and had expended large sums to relieve the necessities of his starving soldiers. General Washington gave him a letter to the President of Congress; and Noel Branzholm, having obtained leave of absence, made the journey in his General's company.

As, owing to the disturbed state of the country, the stage-coaches had ceased to ply even as far as Princetown, they journeyed on horseback, with a couple of attendants. They had ridden some way in silence, when the General suddenly asked Noel what he was thinking of?

"I was thinking, sir, of the first time that ever I saw you, and of all that has happened since," answered Noel.

"'Twas an odd meeting," said Arnold, looking sharply at his young companion. "I'll wager you thought I was a swaggering apothecary."

"I thought, sir, when you spoke of opportunity, that you was the man to seize one," replied Noel boldly—he knew that his General loved an outspoken answer. "And you may remember I promised to follow wherever you might lead. 'Tis not a promise a man makes every day, but I've never regretted making it—and I shall never, I'm sure, regret keeping it."

"You have kept it," said Arnold; "and whoever may turn against me, or play me false, I know you will not. Before ever you had spoke a word that day we met, I knew you was single-hearted."

"To be faithful, sir, is the least a man can do," said Noel; "we cannot control good fortune, but to be faithful lays in a man's own power."

CHAPTER XLIV.

GENERAL ARNOLD WITHDRAWS HIS RESIGNATION.

Let me embrace you,
Ere you depart ! It may be one of us
Shall never do the like again.

THE TRAGEDY OF VALENTINIAN.

It was in a very disconsolate mood that Noel was waiting at General Arnold's lodging on a sultry afternoon in July. The General had desired him to be there by three o'clock, and it was now past four. Noel had read the *Pennsylvania Packet*, which he found on the floor, until he had nearly dropped asleep—to be awakened by a blue-bottle fly buzzing in his ear. He had in sheer desperation examined a hideous shell-work cornucopia—a *chef d'œuvre* which the General had considerably damaged by keeping his pens in it. Some one upstairs was playing the Old 100th on the harmonica. The casement was open, but very little air was stirring. Now and then, a step was to be heard going along the street, but this was so rare that Noel took the trouble to get up and look out. Once, it was a slow and pompous step—and Noel, peeping between the tall pots of lavender and golden-rod which effectually screened the window, saw Dr. Yeldall, in three-cornered hat, full-bottomed wig, and red cloth coat, on his way to visit a patient, shaking his head and muttering to himself, as he banged the pebbles with his gold-headed cane. Noel watched the doctor out of sight, and then impatiently returned to his chair and his meditations.

Things were going ill. There was evidently no thought now of striking the one great blow with which all the young soldiers dreamed of putting an end to the war. Above all, there was no idea of attempting to dislodge the enemy from New York—an enterprise with the anticipation of which Noel had beguiled the long way from Canada. That New York would be invested, a concerted attack made by sea and land, and the city forced to capitulate—these were visions on which Noel had allowed himself to dwell, until it seemed to him incomprehensible that General Washington should hesitate a moment before beginning his preparations. If only a sufficient force were brought to bear, success would be certain—for Noel was far too sanguine to perceive the dangers of becoming

entangled in the British lines, in a district where Tories abounded, and where the enemy would therefore be sure of receiving instant information of every movement.

It was a necessary part of the picture that Althea Digby should by this means fall into the hands of the victorious besiegers, to be by them treated with such chivalrous magnanimity that she must needs forgive her captors. How else could Noel ever hope to see her again? If, indeed, she had not left for England already! But Jasper had expressly said that she did not intend to return thither. She had told him that her relations there had not been so eager with offers of service, immediately after her father's death, as that she would care to throw herself on their kindness now. Though Jasper had answered his brother's questions fully, it was evident to Noel that the subject of Althea Digby was one which he shrank from discussing.

"You still think ill of her in your heart,—I can see it, Jasper,—but, by heaven, you do her wrong!" he had exclaimed the last time they spoke of her. And Jasper had replied,—“I never thought ill of her—never, that is, after I had heard her speak. Will you never forget that one unfortunate word, for which, as I've told you, she herself has forgiven me?”

"Twas like her to do so!" said Noel. "I protest, brother, you've given me such a picture of her generosity, that you've made me love her more than ever!"

"Then do not again accuse me of thinking ill of her," returned Jasper.

But this afternoon, as the moments went by, and the General did not come back, Noel told himself that whatever Jasper might protest, he was certain he was uneasy about Althea's influence over him.

"He knows her very little—and me still less," he thought, with some chagrin, "to imagine it possible. 'Tis the only time I ever knew his judgement to be at fault. But he hath never yet loved a woman himself, and so hath a notion that a man in love is but a nose of wax, to be moulded as his mistress chooses."

Noel felt that something had come between Jasper and himself, and that that something was Althea Digby. So keenly did he feel this, that he had even asked himself if it was worth while to let the mere memory of a woman, whom but too probably he would never see again, estrange him ever so little from his brother. But he knew that so long as there remained

the least hope of winning her, he could never deliberately give her up. He believed that she felt kindly towards him—she had assured him of her sisterly regard, with a sincerity he could not mistake ; and all that Jasper had said confirmed this. But Noel did not deceive himself ; in his heart he knew that he had not yet gained her love. And if the King's troops were to be left much longer in comfortable possession of New York, who could tell but that some smart young British officer might not step in and carry off the prize ?

Noel had seen his brother several times since he had been in Philadelphia, but by tacit consent, they had avoided speaking of Althea. There was nothing new to say, and even Noel felt a disinclination to dwell on hopes which every month, as it went by, made less likely to be realised.

It is obvious that there was very little in all this calculated to cheer Noel's spirits ; and the longer he waited for the General, the more dismally was he persuaded that everything was going wrong. He had been pouring out this conviction to Mary Fleming, that very morning, and he wished the General would come, that he might get away in time to go and take a dish of tea at the Slate-Roof House. They ought not to have drunk tea ; but they did—and called it coffee. Mary had protested a little, but Mrs. Branzholm declared there was no harm—there could be no talk of tea-duty now, and the tea was there, and why not drink it ? Meanwhile, time was running on, and that young coxcomb, Graydon's cousin, would be there, hanging over Mary, and Noel would not be able to get a word with her ! The General must be detained by something serious. In disgust at the long-continued refusal of Congress either to pass his accounts, or to give him his proper rank, he had yesterday sent in his resignation ; but surely Congress would decline to accept it !

General Arnold had now been three months in Philadelphia, vainly demanding the settlement of his accounts. Once during that time it had seemed as though something was to be done. Sir William Howe had made a demonstration towards the city, and Arnold had been sent for to the Delaware above Trenton ; but the British Commander had refused battle—though those best able to judge, believed that he was meditating crossing the Delaware with a view to marching on Philadelphia.

Noel respected his brother's opinion too much to have ever wished to see Washington superseded by Lee, but he could not help secretly lamenting the capture of that General—as the

silencing of a voice which was always given for action. He tried to comfort himself by remembering that General Arnold had never expressed any admiration for Lee's military abilities, and had even said that his ignominious capture served the braggart right.

"If His Excellency had full powers, as he ought to have, General Arnold would not have been kept here, dancing attendance, till he resigned his commission in disgust," thought Noel ruefully. "Oh, for one bold dash, in which we might risk all to win all!"

Just then, he heard the hasty determined step—which always made his heart leap with the hope of something to be undertaken—and caught a glimpse of General Arnold turning in at the door. In a moment he entered the room. His face was flushed and angry, yet something about his whole manner made Noel say respectfully,—

"You look, sir, as though you had heard good news. May I hope that Congress has done you justice at last?"

"Congress be d——d!" said Arnold with a triumphant defiance in his tone. "No! they think to wear me out with their rascally lawyer-like delays! His Excellency's only fault is that he shows 'em too much respect—he should send 'em about their business, as Cromwell did the Rump! A curse on Kings and Congresses, say I! No! they have not done me justice, and they never will—but, for all that, I've withdrawn my resignation!"

"Then are we to attack New York, sir?" cried Noel joyfully.

"No," said Arnold, smiling at the young fellow's impetuosity; "we leave that for General Lee to do, when he is exchanged—he hath been long enough in New York," he added sarcastically, "to know the best points of attack. We are to do better than that. Burgoyne is advancing on the Hudson, and two expresses have come in from Schuyler. St. Clair has evacuated Ticonderoga without striking a blow, and is wandering in the woods with his army—no one knows where! You look astounded—but 'tis but the inevitable result of the pig-headed obstinacy which would not believe the Sugar-Loaf Hill was accessible, though Wayne and I climbed it last summer, to prove it was! Well, Ticonderoga is lost, and Schuyler writes that he is at the head of a handful of men—five hundred at most—and only five rounds of ammunition a

man—the country in consternation, Fort George threatened, and the Indians at work scalping by Fort Stanwix!”

The General walked about the room, clenching his hands with rage as he spoke.

“Fools! always counting on what may not be—instead of acting on what may be!” he exclaimed presently, while Noel stood by in dismayed silence. “The loss of the place and all the artillery and stores is bad enough, but the panic is a thousand times worse than all! Burgoyne is marching through the country like a conqueror, and if he once gets down the Hudson we are lost! When I think how all I won in Canada has been fooled away, I could curse!” And then with a sudden change of manner, he added quietly,—“I have withdrawn my resignation, and offered to serve, if I must, under St. Clair.”

He smiled sarcastically as he said it, and when Noel exclaimed; “’Twas a noble patriotic resolution, sir!” he rejoined that it was a sacrifice he might never be called on to make, as it was quite possible that St. Clair’s scalp was dangling by this time at Joseph Brant’s girdle. “But however that may be, I shall go,” he concluded.

“Then I was right, sir, and you’ve brought good news,” said Noel, who believed his General to be invincible. “When you came in, I was just wishing we might for once be permitted to risk all to win all—and here is the opportunity, and a glorious one indeed!”

“’Tis well there are wiser and cooler heads than yours, my young friend, to remember that one may also risk all to lose all,” said the General looking at him good-naturedly. “But I like to see spirit. And this time we must do more than last—Burgoyne must be beat at all hazards. I have told ’em I’ll serve without a command if they won’t give me one; but Washington will, I know, never let that indignity be put upon me.”

It so happened, that next morning Jasper came in from Morristown. He had only one day’s leave, and had ridden all night. He came just in time to see his brother once more. On both sides the interview was affecting—almost solemn. Noel was about to start on what must prove a perilous campaign, and it was equally certain that Sir William Howe did not mean to leave General Washington in undisturbed possession of the field much longer.

“We may be pretty sure ’tis all part of one plan,” said Noel in answer to a remark which Jasper had made. And

then he took his brother's hand and said, looking at him very sadly,—“Jasper, if I fall, and you escape, and you are ever able to get speech of her, tell her I never forgot her. Nay, dear brother, why should my saying it move you?” for Jasper's eyes had filled with tears. “’Tis no more like to be because we speak of it. And for God's sake, take care of yourself, for if anything was to happen to you, ’twould, I'm sure, break my heart. ’Tis my greatest trouble that we are so often parted. We've never had a thought that the other did not know,—oh, I guess more of yours than you tell me! And if we do not meet again, remember I said nothing on earth could ever come between us for long,—not even a woman's love.”

They embraced each other without speaking.

“I've nothing to say in case anything should happen to me,” said Jasper when he had a little recovered his calmness—his hands still rested on Noel's shoulders, and he looked in his eyes without flinching—“except that I would have you remember you was always dearer to me than myself.”

Many tears were shed the day that Noel left Philadelphia. Mrs. Branhholm seemed as though she could not let him go, and Mary, when she kissed him, was as pale as death, and her lips were almost as cold. But Noel had shaken off his momentary depression, and he rode away in very tolerable spirits.

CHAPTER XLV.

SIR JOHN BURGOYNE PUTS ON HIS ARMOUR.

If after all my loving warnings,
My wishes and my bowels' yearnings,
You shall remain as deaf as adder,
Or grow with hostile rage the madder,
I swear by George and by St. Paul,
I will exterminate you all.
Subscribed with my manual sign,
T'attest these presents,

JOHN BURGOYNE.

It was with a Proclamation conceived very much in this strain, that Sir John Burgoyne set out upon the conquest of the rebellious Provinces of North America. So admirably appointed an army had perhaps never been sent out before. It only numbered somewhere about ten thousand men in all; but these men

were the very flower of the British army, and the Generals were men of tried courage and ability. One of them, General Fraser, was the son of that old Simon, Lord Lovat of Fraser, who, having hunted with the hounds and run with the hare for so long, at last laid his gray head on the block upon Tower Hill, after the 'Forty-five. His son hoped, by zealously serving the House of Hanover, to get the attainder reversed and the estates restored. The train of artillery was the finest ever given to so small a force. There were four thousand mercenaries—Hessians, Waldeckers, Anspachers, and Brunswickers, under Baron Riedesel—and it was credibly asserted that the Hessians had double teeth all round their jaws.

Sir John himself was a person whose birth, antecedents, and character, all combined to make him a romantic figure. Everybody knew that he was a son of Lord Bingley. He had followed up this advantage by running away with Lord Derby's daughter. The Earl—perhaps misliking the bar-sinister—had been for a long time inexorable. Burgoyne, however, distinguished himself in Portugal, where he had formed a friendship with Lee. He was also a wit, and a man of elegant tastes. So at last, when his heir was to be married, Lord Derby relented, and permitted his audacious son-in-law to write a play for the occasion. It was called *The Maid of the Oaks*, and Mr. Walpole made cruel fun of it. But the General wrote another, which he called *The Heiress*—and this Mr. Walpole was pleased to say was the gentlest comedy in the language.

Besides all these claims to admiration, Sir John was a brave soldier; and, if he was a weak man, and too fond of vainglorious proclamations, was a very kind-hearted one, with a foolish romantic generosity—not of the highest sort, but genuine in its way. And his abhorrence of cruelty was quite genuine—for which reasons we will hope that *Junius*, when he accused him of cheating at play, was merely indulging the innate malignancy of his genius.

This gallant little army was to march from Quebec, by the St. Lawrence and Lake Champlain, to the Hudson, and so to Albany. Colonel St. Leger was to co-operate with Sir John from the Valley of the Mohawk, and Sir Henry Clinton was to advance up the Hudson. There was plenty of elbow-room here. The march lay through the old battle-grounds on which French and English had so often contended for the mastery. The way led by lakes and mountains, fertile flats, and deep

valleys, through dark forests, along great rivers, through districts sometimes populous and cultivated, and sometimes inhabited only by wild animals and wilder red men. The little stone church of each village that they passed had often been turned into a citadel, wherein the men had defended their wives and children from the terrible Mohawks and Oneidas.

A large body of these warriors was attached to General Burgoyne's army, led by Sir John Johnson and Joseph Brant, the famous Sagamore of the Mohawks. The General harangued these noble savages at Crown Point. He carefully explained to them (as they stood or sat round with impassive faces, all feathered and painted, and wrapped solemnly in their blankets), that in this war they must not act up to their national traditions—here the contending parties were of the same blood, and the loyal might even be confounded with the rebellious. Having thus exhorted the leopard to change his spots, Sir John moved down the country, driving Schuyler before him step by step towards Fort Edward.

Schuyler meanwhile was not idle. He was too weak to fight till the arrival of the reinforcements which Washington was hurrying up; but he could do much to gain time—and he did it. Time was everything; if Burgoyne could once get down the Hudson to New York, the Colonies would be cut in two, and all would be lost. So while Sir John was haranguing the Six Nations on the amenities of civilised warfare, and denouncing the torture of prisoners, Schuyler was destroying bridges, felling trees, blocking roads, digging trenches, rendering creeks unnavigable, driving off cattle, destroying forage, and placing every possible obstacle in his enemy's way. More than this, he had a spy who had consented to run the awful risks of entering Burgoyne's service, and who brought him Burgoyne's despatches to Clinton, and Clinton's replies, which Schuyler was thus able to alter so as to ensure yet more delay. Lincoln was at Manchester, raising the militia of Vermont, and Arnold was already on the march. Delay was salvation.

No one can have much observed the course of human affairs (whether on the great or the little scale), without having perceived a certain ebb and flow of Fortune's tide. "Misfortunes," says the proverb, "never come alone." One piece of ill-luck will sometimes seem to have broken the spell of good-luck—thereafter, everything goes wrong.

Something like this happened to Sir John Burgoyne, as he

marched on, flushed with success-to-be. We may be sure that these strange turns of fortune are not mere chance, but have their causes deep-rooted in the moral law of the universe; but we cannot always trace the connection of cause and effect so clearly as here. The tragic death of a young girl was to put an end to the panic which Burgoyne was spreading, and to raise him mortal enemies out of the very ground; it was the first small cloud which grew and grew until it covered all his sky.

Burgoyne's old comrade Lee delighted to vent his misanthropy in praising the fine breeding of the Mohawk chiefs who honoured him with their friendship; but it was scarcely to be expected of the author of a genteel comedy that he should admire them. General Burgoyne did not love Mohawks and Oneidas, but he believed that a certain wild honour inspired the savage breast, and he trusted that a diligent study of the humane arts of European warfare would soften their manners. In this confidence, he remarked with satisfaction that the very same Indians who had destroyed poor Braddock (led by Langdale, who had commanded them on that terrible day) were now marching peacefully beneath his banners to annihilate the rebels. But even already his satisfaction was dashed by the perpetual anxiety in which they kept him, and he was further plagued by the Canadian interpreters, who could not always be trusted to interpret truly.

He had got almost as far as Fort Edward by the end of July—moving at about the rate of a mile a day, and doubtless cursing Schuyler's ingenuity—when, one morning, a party of Indians brought into camp a very stout elderly lady, stripped to her chemise, who proved to be Mrs. Campbell, a cousin of General Fraser's, and a staunch loyalist. No woman in camp had a gown big enough, so the General lent the poor lady his own camp-coat, and a pocket handkerchief for a cap. She told how she and her young friend Miss M'Crea—who was that very morning to have gone down the river to join her brother—had been seized in their own house at Fort Edward by Indians, and were being hurried off, when a negro boy gave the alarm, and a detachment of Provincials from the fort came out to the rescue. At the foot of an ascent, where the road divided, she had been parted from Jennie, and knew not what had become of her.

Mrs. Campbell had hardly got thus far in her story, when another party of Indians came in—with Jennie's bloody scalp.

The rest has been told many times, with various degrees of

horror. Perhaps the least shocking version is the true one, and the fierce "Wyandot Panther" only took her scalp—as he protested—after she had been killed by a shot from her would-be rescuers. Mrs. Campbell was inclined to believe it—for Burgoyne, to show himself in earnest, had promised a much larger reward for a living prisoner than for a scalp. But the truth is tragic enough. Jennie's brother was a Whig, and she was betrothed to Lieutenant David Jones—now serving in Burgoyne's army, and there present to behold her long dark hair dripping with her blood. The report spread, and was long believed, that he had sent the Indians to bring her into camp, knowing that her brother was about to take her away to Albany. This was not true; but there can be no doubt that the poor girl had lingered at Fort Edward, in spite of her brother's urgent messages entreating her to return, in the hope of seeing her Tory lover. All the inhabitants were fleeing; but Mrs. Campbell, as a loyalist and General Fraser's relative, had nothing to fear—and poor Jennie knew that along with General Fraser would come Lieutenant Jones.

Most people know the end of the heart-rending story—how the poor young lieutenant, after indignantly denying that he had any part in the affair, asked to resign his commission, and, being refused, deserted, taking with him that long tress of hair—which he had bought of the Indians—and never held up his head again.

Sir John's horror was unfeigned. He wanted to punish somebody, but was taken aside by St. Luc, the other leader of the Indians,—Sir John had called him "a Canadian gentleman of honour,"—and informed that the "wild honour" of Sachems forbids the giving up of a culprit, and that if he is to be too extreme to mark iniquity, his savage allies will abandon him, and perhaps ravage Canada as they go. The General was by this time heartily sick of wild honour, but he was obliged to content himself with issuing still more urgent restrictions.

But no proclamations, or restrictions, or severity, could undo the effect of that deed. The British General had let loose these fiends on a Christian country, and poor Jennie M'Crea had an avenger in every man and woman who heard her story. The burning indignation which it aroused united the whole country in the resolve to resist to the last.

CHAPTER XLVI.

THE RELIEF OF FORT STANWIX.

WHEN, on one of the last days of July, General Arnold brought up his reinforcements, and joined Schuyler at Fort Edward, he found that General preparing to move down to Moses Creek, a little below, and affairs in a very critical state indeed ; and a few days after, in spite of all the hindrances which Schuyler had put in his way, Sir John Burgoyne was at Fort Edward—where his army, with loud rejoicings, first beheld the river Hudson.

Nor was this all. On the 3d of August, Colonel St. Leger, with Sir John Johnson and Joseph Brant, had invested Colonel Gansevoort in Fort Stanwix, in the Mohawk Valley ; and General Harkeimer, marching to his relief with some militia, was caught in a forest-ambush prepared by Brant—whose sister Molly, old Sir William's left-handed wife, had sent him word. Harkeimer and his men had made a gallant stand, but not one would have escaped, but for a storm of rain so violent that even the Indians could not fight until it ceased ; and before it ceased, Gansevoort, who had heard by a messenger that Harkeimer was coming, sent out Colonel Willett to make a diversion. But the slaughter was frightful—neighbours were there fighting against neighbours (for Tryon County was full of loyalists), and Harkeimer's own brother was commanding the Indians, who, as though maddened by this strife of brethren, surpassed themselves in ferocity.

Harkeimer was dead of his wounds, Johnson was threatening Gansevoort with an Indian massacre, and Colonel Willett had crossed the Mohawk on a log, in a violent storm, and reached the camp at Stillwater—but not till the 12th—to beg for aid.

Schuyler, who had already heard of the disaster of Oriskany, and was devising means to save the fort and the Valley of the Mohawk, instantly called a council-of-war. But the council hesitated—the army was too weak already—they dared not spare a detachment.

If the head that wears a crown lies uneasy, a General does not sleep on roses. General Schuyler had fared almost as ill as Arnold himself. As a New Yorker, he was obnoxious to the

New England party; and his strict Dutch discipline did not commend him to the insubordinate spirits of New Hampshire. He had been a Commissioner, on the part of New York, on the much-vexed question of the Grants, and was detested for this also by the New Hampshire grantees. All the Eastern influence in Congress, led by the Adamses, was being exerted to supersede him by Gates—who had been a Commissioner for New Hampshire, and who was, moreover, well versed in the practice of those arts of popularity which Philip Schuyler disdained. Vexatious and malicious charges had been brought against him. Dunder-headed Vermont militiamen had written to Washington, to say that “on their consciences” they believed General Schuyler was a traitor, and had introduced the small-pox into the army. He had even been accused of having sold Ticonderoga, and of having been paid in silver bullets fired into his camp! More serious attempts than these had been made to poison Washington’s ear, but all in vain. His health had for a time given way, and he had wished to resign his command; but Washington had persuaded him to stay and serve his country through good report and evil—and so he stayed.

The council-of-war was held in Dirck Swart’s house. The officers sat at a rude wooden table in the centre of the room, on which some ingenious person had amused his leisure by carving the effigy of a Hessian—brass cap, belt, sword, bayonet and all, and made more hideous by various splashes of red. The ink-pot happened to be set on this foreign mercenary’s stomach—so that as often as any of the assembled council dipped in his quill he seemed to be running him through—so at least it appeared to Noel’s lively fancy, as he stood just within the door, having come to the council as General Arnold’s aide, but modestly refraining from taking a seat, until Schuyler himself asked him somewhat brusquely, why he stood?

Schuyler was walking up and down the room with long impatient strides, smoking furiously; every now and then he would snatch the pipe from his mouth and utter a word or two, but most often he muttered to himself, casting angry glances at the end of the table farthest from the place where Arnold sat. Arnold himself was silent—he had scarcely spoken a word since his brief greeting of Schuyler on his entrance; but his eyes were restless, and his lips were set. Noel knew the signs well, and knew that his General was in a fume. He sat half-turned from the table, his arms clasped over the back of his chair,

watching Schuyler as he turned in his walk—with, however, many a swift glance towards the farther end of the room, where a group of officers were whispering together.

Presently Schuyler spoke.

“Are we to leave Gansevoort to his fate?” he asked angrily.

Noel saw Arnold’s eyes flash, but he did not speak—he only turned himself on his chair, so as to be able to watch Schuyler. As he caught Noel’s eye, he slightly shrugged his shoulders, with an almost imperceptible movement of his hand in the direction of the group of officers still laying their heads together at the other end of the table. One or two older men who sat on one side looked up from a map they were studying. Their grave anxious faces turned inquiringly towards Arnold.

“It is a heavy responsibility, General,” said one of them, “and demands the utmost prudence.” And Arnold replied shortly—“Boldness is the best prudence sometimes;” and fixed his eyes again on Schuyler.

“Will none of you speak, gentlemen?” asked Schuyler, facing round impatiently. “Are we to leave Gansevoort and his garrison to the tender mercies of Sir John Johnson and the Mohawks? You know my opinion; but if you have anything to urge——”

“He wants to weaken the army.”

Noel heard the words distinctly, but did not know who had uttered them. Schuyler heard them too, and a dark flush dyed his sallow face, as he crushed his pipe between his teeth. But he controlled his rising passion, and said with dignity, raising his head, and looking at the group—not one of whom cared to meet his eye,—“Gentlemen, I take the responsibility on myself. Where is the Brigadier who will command the relief?”

“I will!” answered Arnold, springing up so impetuously that he upset his chair. “To-morrow morning early I will beat up for volunteers!”

* * * * *

When General Arnold with his nine hundred volunteers set out to the relief of Fort Stanwix, he said to Schuyler—“You will hear of my being victorious, or no more.” But at Fort Dayton he held a council-of-war, at which a friendly Oneida Indian told them that the enemy numbered seventeen hundred besides Tories—on hearing which, the council thought the attempt too hazardous, until the army should be reinforced.

The General’s manner of taking this greatly puzzled Noel,

who expected to see him fall into a rage. He heard his officers' opinions almost in silence, merely saying absently, that the odds were great, and no precaution must be neglected. But his mind was evidently preoccupied; and as soon as the council rose, he desired Major Branzholm (who as aide-de-camp took that rank) to have Hon Yost Cuyler sent for—and began to hastily draw up a proclamation.

Hon Yost was a half-witted fellow—a Dutchman, of the Mohawk Valley—who had been seized at Mr. Justice Shoemaker's house the night before, with Lieutenant Walter Butler of St. Leger's detachment. Being caught in the act of trying to persuade the inhabitants of German Flats to abandon the Provincial cause, and join the King's forces before Fort Stanwix, the lieutenant had been tried that morning by a court-martial, and sentenced to death. But many of the officers had known him when he was a law-student in Albany, so (unluckily for Cherry Valley) he was reprieved. Hon Yost's family were Tories, but his mother and brother had instantly hastened to Fort Dayton, to beg him off. The mother was a wild gipsy-looking creature, who most likely had Indian blood in her veins; and she besought General Arnold with such frantic eloquence that the whole court was moved,—all but, as it seemed, the General himself, who sat listening to her—his chin propped on three fingers, while the forefinger rested on his cheek—as if he hardly heard her. Noel was much puzzled by his insensibility. Surely he did not mean to hang this poor half-witted wretch, when he had spared Butler? "'Tis not like him to strike the low, and spare the high," he thought. "Nor have I ever seen him unmerciful before."

Meanwhile the General, breaking silence at last, was sternly telling the unhappy mother that it was such as her son who did such incalculable mischief, in carrying news and acting as go-betweens, and that he would make an example—here he frowned so darkly, that she gave up hope, and ceasing her prayers, broke into loud weeping.

"Provost, do your duty!" said the General, rising—but before he left the court he beckoned to the Provost, and whispered in his ear.

So now, when the General desired Hon Yost to be sent for, Major Branzholm made bold to say,—“I'll go this instant, sir, but I fear he may be hanged by now.”

“No; he is not hanged,” replied the General, with an odd

smile. "I do not hang idiots. Send the three to me, and leave us alone."

Not even to Noel did the General speak of what passed at this interview; all that he knew was that the mother and brother were taken back to the lock-up, while Hon Yost (after having had half-a-dozen shots fired through the skirts of his garments) was permitted to go, with a stern warning from the General at parting, to mind what he was about. And the same afternoon, the General said he should go on, council or no council, and repeated his favourite adage—that in war expedition is equal to strength.

* * * *

It was about noon of the next day, and Major Branhholm was riding beside his commander. The General had been obliged to borrow a horse of Colonel Lewis, as, by some chance, his own had not arrived, though his sister had sent them on weeks ago. The horse was a thoroughbred, almost black—a gallant high-spirited beast, and was named "Warren," after that beloved leader who fell on Bunker's Hill. The General had been speaking much of Joseph Warren, whose intimate friend he had been, and had complained indignantly that Congress had not been more prompt in providing for his orphan children. He added that he believed the matter had now been attended to—but Noel knew that if it were so, it would be thanks to General Arnold.

As they were still talking of this, a horseman came galloping towards them—at sight of whom the General's dark countenance relaxed into a grim smile, as he said, very meaningfully,—“I should not in the least wonder, Branhholm, but what this is an express from Gansevoort, come to tell us the siege is raised. Hon Yost is half an idiot, 'tis true, but the other half of him is a very cunning fellow.”

“What, sir?” cries Noel. “Was that, then, why you seemed so implacable with him at first?”

“If I'm not much out in my reckoning,” returns the General, still with that grim smile, “we shall hear that the siege of Fort Stanwix was raised in the night, on a report of General Arnold's being at hand with two thousand men.”

And so it was.

* * * *

When Arnold returned to camp (after being received with a salute of honour at Fort Stanwix), he found that Schuyler's

enemies had triumphed, and that Gates reigned in his stead—appointed, however, directly by Congress, as Washington had declined to have anything to do with the matter.

But there was more news than this. On the 15th of August, Sir John Burgoyne had sent Count Baum and his Hessians to destroy the stores at Bennington. John Starke was there—having resigned and gone home to his farm last spring, in wrath at being passed over in a list of promotions. Starke had called out the militia, and fallen upon Baum in the forest, in the rainy dawn of a day so tempestuous, that the earth-works which Baum hastily cast up were washed down as soon as they were made. Meanwhile, from every township the Provincial militia came pouring in, all eager to fight.

“We have been called out very often, and never been led against the enemy yet,”—say the people of Berkshire, with Parson Allen of Pittsfield at their head. “And if you don’t let us fight now, we won’t come again.”

“Please the Lord to once more send us sunshine,” says Starke, “and if I don’t give you fighting enough, I’ll never ask you to come again.”

The sun shone out of a cloudless sky next morning, and Starke kept his word. At daybreak on the 17th, General Burgoyne was awakened to be told that Baum was defeated and slain, and that Breyman, who had been sent to reinforce him, was trying to retreat, hotly pursued by the enemy.

This was a great blow. If the loss of Ticonderoga had struck the rebels with panic, the victory of Bennington put them in such heart that their Generals could hardly keep them back. The British army began to be harassed by skirmishers, who cut off the pickets, and attacked the parties engaged in repairing the bridges which Schuyler had broken down.

By this time, a great number of the Indians had slipped away; the British General’s illiberality in the matter of plunder and scalps had outraged their “wild honour,” and having vainly tried to make him hear reason, they remembered that it was harvest-time, and departed to their wigwams—not going empty away.

* * * * *

General Arnold was now to suffer more tangible evils from the refusal of Congress to give him his proper rank and position. The cabals in Congress had never run higher than now. Lee’s star had set for the time, but Gates’s was in the ascen-

dant. How strong his influence was, no one knew precisely—whispers had got about that some of the greatest names in Congress were with him. But Washington's advice could not be entirely disregarded—Congress had ungraciously yielded so far as to request Arnold to "co-operate" with Schuyler, and so great was his anxiety to serve, that he accepted this nondescript and unmilitary commission. He had hardly, however, reached camp, when he heard that Congress had decided against his seniority. His first impulse had been to resign, but his old friend Schuyler had persuaded him to follow his own example, and swallow the affront for the sake of his country.

As long as Schuyler was in command, this was easy, but with the arrival of Gates Arnold's position became almost intolerable. Horatio Gates might fairly be described as being everything that Philip Schuyler was not. He was by birth an Englishman, and a godson of Horace Walpole's—some said that the second half of the word would have sufficed to express the relationship, but as Gates was only twelve years the younger, there must have been some error in this bit of scandal. Like so many other leading actors in the war, he had been with Braddock at the Great Meadows, but had sold out of the army, dissatisfied with his promotion. His enemies said that years of solicitation had taught him to wheedle and flatter, and be all things to all men. He had retired to Virginia, a disappointed man, and had there renewed his old soldier's friendship with Washington, and when the war broke out had espoused the Provincial cause. He had long been secretly manœuvring to supplant Washington, and he thought that he had now almost succeeded. In the former Canadian campaign, Gates and Arnold had been friendly; but Gates was beginning to count Washington's friends as his own enemies—and some said he was afraid lest Arnold's brilliant daring should eclipse his own generalship.

He was now nearly fifty, and looked much older—a stout florid-complexioned man, rather comely than otherwise, but fussy and excitable in manner—as great a contrast in person as in character to the high-minded soldier and gentleman whom he had superseded.

CHAPTER XLVII.

FREEMAN'S FARM.

Said Burgoyne to his men, as they pass'd in review,

Tullalo, tullalo, tullalo, boys !

These rebels their course very quickly will rue,

And fly as the leaves 'fore the autumn tempest flew

When him who is your leader they know, boys !

They with men have now to deal,

And we soon will make them feel—

Tullalo, tullalo, tullalo, boys !

That a loyal Briton's arm, and a loyal Briton's steel

Can put to flight a rebel as quick as other foe, boys !

Tullalo, tullalo, tullalo !

Tullalo, tullalo, tullalo-o-o-o, boys !

PROGRESS OF SIR JACK BRAG.

ON the west side of the Hudson, about three miles above its junction with the Mohawk, there is a ridge of hills called Bemis' Heights. The only tavern to be found between Albany and Fort Edward, in old days, stood on the bluff, and was kept by one Bemis—who also kept good wines and long clay pipes. Perhaps it was some way-worn eighteenth-century trader who, grateful for these mercies, gave his host's name to the landscape.

And a great landscape it is—a landscape of broad-swelling hills. On the north, the heights of Saratoga ; on the south, the hills of Albany, thirty miles away. Bennington, too, lies thirty miles away to the south-east, but the smoke of the battle was seen from Bemis' Heights.

Along this ridge, one September afternoon, General Arnold rode with Kosciuszko ("the Polish engineer," they called him) to find a camping-ground. Up hill and down dale they rode, till they came to Sword's House, where Morgan and his rifles were, and where Noel saw old Meshach Pike, leaning on his musket, exactly as he had stood on that Sunday morning, three years ago, when there was the Indian alarm at Oglethorpe.

He saw Noel, and—by way of returning his greeting—unhitched his chin from his clasped hands, and sauntering up to the side of Noel's horse, spat with energy, and then stood still a full minute before he remarked,—

"Reckon Gen'ral Braxholm'd give his ears to be in our shoes. This yer's jest about the kind o' country as he'd like to fight in—wood enough, an' not *tu* much. Dan Morgan he's

quite countin' on payin' back that extry lash he's owed the Britishers these twenty year. I call it a reel lux'ry to have time to look around and choose yer place, 'stid o' jest hearin' an Injun screech, an' havin' to take the nighest tree you can get to."

"Bennington was a good beginning," said Noel, when Meshach had, with great slowness and deliberation, delivered himself of these observations. "We must do our best to make as good an ending."

"Ther's some of us means to try, Mr. Branzholm," replied Meshach, emphasising his words by spitting again, and shifting his quid. "Dan Morgan does, an' I think Gen'ral Arnold does. An' I've noticed," continued Meshach, as he completed the operation, "that Gen'ral Arnold arl-ways says, 'Come on, boys!' He don't never say, 'Go, boys!'"

"You may well say that!" cried Noel. "Where is the General like him? We can't be beat if he leads us!"

The reconnoitring party rode on a little farther to the next hill, whence they could see the British camp; the soldiers seemed to be parading, but without beat of drum. Burgoyne had crossed the Hudson the day before, and was now encamped at Saratoga.

It was not till the 19th of September, however, that Dan Morgan began to pay off that old score. By this time, Sir John Burgoyne and his army had found their march so much more difficult than they had expected, that it had even been mooted whether they should not go round by Fort George. But this would have the appearance of a retreat, and Sir John had said that army must not retreat. The enemy grew bolder every day, till he had to send out whole regiments to protect his working-parties. He had, moreover, by Schuyler's contrivance, received the most contradictory despatches from Sir Henry Clinton—who ought to be by this time preparing to march up to Albany. But something must be done; so he moved from his headquarters in Schuyler's mansion, near Fishkil (Schuyler had sent word to his wife to burn his wheat-fields before she fled), and, crossing the Hudson on a bridge of boats, prepared for battle.

The sun rose bright on the 19th of September, 1777. The air was clear, and long before the hoar-frost had melted from the forest-trees the beat of drum was heard in the British camp. About nine o'clock, word came to Gates that the enemy

seemed to be forming his line of battle. The scouts and pickets had seen the glitter of moving arms and flags, and the bright scarlet of the British uniforms. By ten, it was evident that Burgoyne's whole army was advancing in three divisions.

But, to Arnold's infinite disgust and vexation, General Gates showed an extraordinary indisposition to fight. For hours Arnold urged and entreated to be allowed to attack. Gates fidgeted up and down the room, fussed with his spectacles, shilly-shallied, talked of letting Burgoyne entangle himself in the woods, and appealed at every moment to his Adjutant-General—who was the same young Wilkinson who had carried his letters to Lee. He was a pert officious youth, so ready to instruct his General in his duty, that those who did not like him said that Mr. Wilkinson thought Gates and himself made up the General commanding.

"The General, sir, is against doing anything rash," says this young whipper-snapper, following Arnold out at the door, and calmly settling his coat-collar, while he looks full in the General's eye, with an expression which says as plain as words,—“If you think, sir, that the General and I are going to let you have the honour and glory of this day's work, you are mightily mistaken!”

“Is he indeed, sir? Then he must be very unlike you!” returns Arnold, glaring at him as though he would wither him where he stands. But at this moment Major Branhholm came galloping up, to say that the enemy was swarming over the heights beyond Freeman's Field.

At this, Arnold, with another look at Wilkinson—which that young gentleman rightly interpreted as a hint not to follow—went hastily into the house again.

The two young men awaited his return in perfect silence, while Arnold's horse, tied up by the door, neighed and pawed the ground, as though he had caught the infection of his master's impatience. There were several other officers standing about. The very air was astir with suspense, and the moments seemed interminable.

“Morgan and Dearborn may attack,” says Arnold, coming out. “Major Wilkinson, the General desires to speak with you.”

“Let us be off,” he says to Noel, as he leaps into his saddle, “before he can think better of it, and fetch us back!”

Morgan attacked with such good will, that he not only routed the Indians and the loyalists, but found his men scattered

in the woods, and himself for a moment left almost alone—and at that moment the enemy was reinforced. But Morgan sounded his “turkey-call” loud and shrill, and gathered his men again; and by this time Arnold, with the New York troops, was trying to turn the enemy’s flank, and cut off Fraser from the main army. So dense was the forest, and so uneven the ground, that neither party knew that each was attempting the same manoeuvre, until they suddenly met on the level ground near Mill Creek.

Arnold led the van—as those who saw it said, “like a tiger.” With voice and action he encouraged his men; but he was outnumbered, and Fraser, seeing his design, brought up Breyman’s riflemen and some infantry. Just then Arnold, reinforced by Dearborn’s regiment and three others, attacked again, so furiously, that the British lines were beginning to give way—when Phillips, who had heard the din of the conflict, hurried over the hills and through the thick woods, with fresh troops, and part of the artillery, and appeared in the very nick of time.

There was a lull. It was three o’clock. The combatants were on two gently-sloping hills, separated by a thick wood and a narrow clearing. Noel, returning from headquarters, whither he had been sent to ask for more reinforcements, could hear the voices of the British officers giving orders on the opposite height. He even fancied that he distinguished Fred Digby’s voice, but this was surely fancy.

General Gates sent word that the British left was too near his lines—he dared not detach any troops. Arnold angrily asked if he was to make bricks without straw? And then the enemy began to open fire again. Burgoyne had ordered the woods to be cleared; and the Provincials soon saw column after column of British infantry advancing steadily across the clearing.

For four hours, the conflict raged in alternate advance and retreat, and the contending armies measured their strength in sheer hard wrestling. The Generals on both sides exposed themselves like common soldiers. One of Burgoyne’s aides was shot down as he was giving him a letter, and it was believed for hours by the Provincials that Burgoyne himself had fallen. All through the afternoon, and far on into the twilight, the two armies wrestled—cannon were taken and retaken, and taken again. And still victory hung in the balance—the British troops fought with stubborn valour, and even in the

gloom of evening there were some brisk renewals of the action. But Gates, though not himself engaged, would send no more reinforcements. In vain had Arnold despatched message after message. The evening was gray, when Noel rode back once more with the old answer—the Commander-in-Chief dared not expose his own lines.

“He will fling away all we have won, with his paltry prudence!” cries Arnold, on hearing this reply. “I’ll go myself!”

And so he gallops off on the good gray horse he rode that day—now covered with dust and foam—and is lost in the smoky mist.

Noel waited long, watching the field, where every now and then a running fire would blaze out for a moment, and then as suddenly cease. On the extreme left, he could at first make out Breyman’s rifles, by the brass match-cases on their breasts, gleaming feebly in the fast-fading light; but soon friend and foe were wrapt in one monotonous cloak of gray, which was fast turning to black when an order came to retire within the lines.

Before this, however, Noel, fancying he heard something stirring in the wood on his right, rode towards it. As he came into the shadow of the trees, he dismounted, and leading his horse, looked about him. Several bodies lay just there, and a groan testified that there was life in at least one of them. Noel was just turning away to get help to remove him, when he saw a figure leaning forward against a tree, grasping a musket. It was not yet so dark but that at these close quarters he saw that it was Meshach Pike. He called him by his name, but Meshach did not reply. Perplexed by this strange silence, Noel went nearer, and pulled him by the sleeve. At the touch, slight as it was, Meshach fell heavily against him, almost knocking him down by the suddenness of the shock—and Noel found that he was holding a dead man in his arms.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

LIEUTENANT PERKINS TAKES A GLOOMY VIEW OF THE SITUATION.

CAPTAIN DIGBY, in command of a picket on the field of battle, spent the night of the 19th in a state of intense disgust with

human affairs. The best-contested engagement of the whole war had been fought, and the Light Infantry (into which, by Lord Percy's influence, he had exchanged) had not taken part in it. True, the result was indecisive, and his turn might yet come. But what opportunities had not been presented to-day for a determined officer (and the Captain was modestly conscious of a very stiff determination when once fairly roused) to make a smart flank-attack, throw the enemy into confusion, and get mentioned in the General's next despatch, as "a gentleman whose services merited particular notice"! There had been a good many such movements made in the course of the day—but alas! the Light Infantry, though forming part of the right wing, had never been actually under fire. The night was cloudy, and a sulphurous mist hung over the field, where burying-parties might be traced by the lights they carried. More than once, Digby heard the howling of wolves in the forest, as they followed the scent of blood. The sound recalled to him his summer in Virginia—when it had seemed as though Fortune was going to make up to him for the ill turns she had done him. How admirably well things might have gone! And how execrably ill they had gone!

Upon the whole, Captain Digby reflected that he did not like this country for fighting. There was too much cover for the enemy (who of course knew every bush); while, in the event of anything like a repulse, it would be a monstrous awkward thing to be entangled in all this wood. "A fine open plain, with plenty of room to manœuvre," he thought, "that's the kind of place for a regular army to come to an engagement in. These woods and thickets may be all very well for Indian warfare, but artillery and cavalry want more room to play in."

The thought of cavalry reminded the Captain of his hard fate in belonging to a foot regiment, and of the mysterious ill fortune which seemed to attend him.

"It is certainly a monstrous odd thing," he thought (listening all the while for any sign that the enemy was moving), "that my poor uncle should die just when there was going to be the very devil to pay—to be sure, if he'd died before though, the poor old dad might have made ducks and drakes of it all. Then there's Ally. How the doose is she to get married, till this confounded business is over? And by all one can see it will go on till Doomsday. We've beat in all the battles—but what's the good of that, when the rebels go on rebelling the same as ever? I

thought when we'd once beat, there'd be an end of it—a general pardon, or something of that sort—let bygones be bygones, and give a man a chance of attending to his private affairs.”

At this point in his reflections, the entirely irrelevant thought occurred to Captain Digby that by this time Mary Fleming might be married to Jasper——

“You was asleep, sir! I’ve had my eye on you these ten minutes!”

The Captain addressed these words to one of the sentinels, who was leaning against a tree in an attitude suggestive of drowsiness.

“Don’t let me catch you at it again, sir!” says Digby, cutting short the man’s protestations, and continuing his patrol and his reflections.

He imparted a portion of these reflections next day to his friend Lieutenant Perkins (whose regiment had been likewise out of the action, and who agreed with him that it was a preposterous thing the rebels did not lay down their arms). “I daresay we shouldn’t hang any of ’em now,” observed Perkins. “I daresay as we shouldn’t even hang Sam Adams, or Washington himself, on their submission.”

“I wish they’d be quick about it then,” rejoined Fred, with a lofty air which he specially reserved to impress his quondam subaltern. “’Tis a monstrous inconvenience to me to be hindered like this from winding up my poor uncle’s estate.”

The Lieutenant, who was one of the ten children of a poor parson in Northamptonshire, and had never wound up anything but the church-clock (which never went right) was immensely impressed,—as Fred intended he should be,—and humbly replied that it must be a monstrous great inconvenience indeed.

“You see, Perkins,” continued Fred, “it’s all according to what a man’s been used to. When a man’s begun life in the Dragoons, the Light Infantry is a come-down.”

To which Perkins dutifully replied that indeed in the nature of things it must be so.

“We’re in a mess though, Digby—we’re in a doose of a mess somehow or other—though I’m hanged if I know how we’ve got into it,” the Lieutenant observed presently, his innocent, almost childish blue eyes, fixed abstractedly on nothing. “Mark my words, we’d a deal better have gone round by way of Fort George. ’Twas a grand mistake to run the gauntlet as we’re doing,

for a mere point of honour. That's my opinion at least," he added modestly. "I may be wrong, of course—and I hope I am."

"You're down in the mouth, Perkins, because you wasn't engaged yesterday," returned Fred reassuringly. "Sir Henry must be on his march before now, and as soon as ever he comes, we shall settle 'em in a jiffy."

It seemed at first as though Perkins had been too despondent. Three days after the engagement of the 19th, a messenger got into camp with a letter in cypher from Sir Henry Clinton, to say that he hoped to attack Fort Montgomery on the Hudson, by the 6th of October. This cheering news emboldened General Burgoyne to give out in orders that powerful armies were co-operating with his own.

The justice of Perkins's view of the situation was, however, shown in a very few days more. By that time, an uncomfortable impression had begun to prevail that the army was in difficulties—or, as Perkins more tersely put it, "in a mess." It was impossible to ignore the facts that forage was running short, and that the rebels had so closed in all round, that the price of getting any more must be, not a skirmish, but another engagement.

"We're in a mess, Digby," said Perkins in a dogged way he had had lately. "It looks to my mind doosed like our being caught in a trap."

"How *can* we be in a mess, when Sir Harry's actually took the field?" asked Fred angrily. Having just had the self-same idea in his own mind, he felt bound to rebuke Perkins for croaking. "'Twas but t'other day," he continued, "we was all jubilation about Ticonderoga. We've had no real reverse since—except at Bennington. That was a devil of an affair, I'll own——"

"We're in a mess," persisted Perkins, nodding his head wisely at his friend. "We hallo'ed before we was out o' the wood. You mark my words, Digby, we're in a mess—I may say, we're in a devil of a mess."

The Lieutenant, who sat nursing his chin (it was as smooth as a baby's), seemed to derive a gloomy consolation from repeating these words.

"If you mean," says Digby in an irritated tone, "that somehow or other in this cursed war the more we beat the enemy, the stronger he seems to get, there'd be some sense in

what you say. For my part, I believe the devil's in it! We've beat 'em into a cocked-hat a dozen times at least. Then why the devil don't they submit? It's making fools of us—positive fools! It's contrary to—to military tactics—and common sense too!”

“ ‘A woman, a span'el, and a crab-apple tree,
The more you beat 'em, the better they be—’ ”

said Perkins slowly and thoughtfully, and still stroking his chin. “Rebels seem to be the same.”

“But, of course, as soon as they hear of Sir Harry's advance, they'll cut and run, every man-jack of 'em,” continued Fred, kicking a boot across the tent so viciously that Perkins did not venture to contradict him this time.

That same afternoon, General Burgoyne's orderly came and requested Captain Digby's attendance at headquarters.

Digby found Phillips and Riedesel with the General. Just as he entered, Riedesel was saying something in his heavy German way—Fred caught the words “point of honour,” to which Sir John replied in an irritated tone,—

“Point of honour! Why, that's everything!”

Then they saw Digby, and the conversation dropped; and Sir John, turning to Fred, told him he had sent for him, because he believed he had been some time in the Colonies, and might be supposed to know a little of the country, and also because, being personally known to Sir Henry Clinton, he could if necessary carry a verbal message. “We don't care to trust an American officer, after the way those scoundrels of Provincials turned on Baron Riedesel's dragoons at Bennington, the other day,” he observed; “and we've reason to believe that the fellow Moses Harris has betrayed us, and been in communication with the rebels all the while.”

Captain Digby remaining respectfully silent, Sir John asked him plainly, did he think he could carry a despatch to General Clinton?

“Where is he, sir?” asks Fred.

“That,” answers the General,—with an assumption of ease that does not hide a real uneasiness,—“that will be for you to find out. We hope and believe that he has already started for Albany. If he should not, however, have done so, you would then push on as quick as possible to New York. Well, sir,

do you dislike your errand?" This the General said very sharply.

"No, sir," stammered Fred. "I shall be honoured—that is, of course, sir, I'm ready to start this very hour."

"But you would sooner somebody else went?"

"'Tis not that, sir," said Fred, driven into a corner. "Only I thought—that is, I hoped that we was going to fight 'em again."

"You hear, Baron!" cries the General, his face brightening. "And I'll be bound, Captain Digby, that all the other Captains hope the same?"

"All I've heard speak on the subject do, sir," replies Fred. On which the General tells him they may get their wish yet; but bids him study the roads (for which purpose he presents him with a map), and consider how best to disguise himself—"for that honest English face of yours," he observes, "would betray you instantly"—and hold himself in readiness to start, if necessary, at a moment's notice.

The General laid some stress on the word "necessary," and glanced at Baron Riedesel, who shrugged his shoulders, and spread out his great broad palms, but did not speak.

CHAPTER XLIX.

A RECONNOITRING PARTY.

. . . It seem'd a narrow neck of land
Had broke between two mighty seas, and either
Flow'd into other; for so did the slaughter:
And whirl'd about, as when two violent tides
Meet and not yield.

CATILINE.

ALMOST immediately after the First Battle of Bemis' Heights, Gates and Arnold had come to an open quarrel. Gates had not only refused to allow Arnold to return to the field on the evening of the 19th, but in his Order of the day, noticing the action, he never mentioned the division at all, although it was the only one engaged. It was the same in his despatch to Congress—for he insolently refused to make his reports through the Commander-in-Chief.

Not content with this, he allowed his Adjutant-General to withdraw Morgan's corps from the division, without so much as informing Arnold. At this, Arnold threatened to resign—to

the consternation of the army. This, however, being precisely what Gates desired, he only became more insolent than ever, and one evening went so far as to tell Arnold that he did not know of his being a Major-General—he had resigned his commission before he joined that army. He added that General Lincoln would arrive in a day or two, and that he should then have no occasion for Arnold, and could give him a pass for Philadelphia.

Maddened by this insult, Arnold had gone back to his own quarters and written to Gates, demanding a pass for himself and his suite—for his aides had declared they would go with him. Major Livingstone, one of them, had been Schuyler's aide, and Mr. Wilkinson had hinted to Arnold that the General felt some natural jealousy of a partisan of Schuyler's; perhaps if Major Livingstone was to be replaced——

"No, sir!" replies Arnold, looking indignantly at the smirking Wilkinson. "Such a proposition is a worse insult than any that General Gates has put upon me yet! You can tell him, sir, if you choose, that I will not sacrifice a friend to please the face of clay! Tell him, too, that I will have a pass made out in proper form; I've already sent him back by Major Branhholm the letter to Mr. Hancock in which he has huddled me in a corner."

Meanwhile all the general-officers in camp had signed an entreaty to General Arnold to remain, as another action was expected daily—the British General would not dare to wait until his provisions were exhausted. This argument was so strong, that Arnold stayed—even though, when Lincoln arrived, Gates gave him the right wing, and, taking the left himself, made good his words about having no occasion for Arnold.

"Oh, that Schuyler was here!" said Noel to Major Livingstone. "But Gates must be very sure his intrigues have succeeded, before he would dare depose the General that His Excellency was so set on appointing! 'Twas a shameful thing to send him here to reap the fruit of Schuyler's labours—and now he will reap the credit of General Arnold's valour! There's no justice in the world!"

"Gates is an old fool," rejoins Livingstone; "but that pert young fool Wilkinson makes him a thousand times worse than he would be else. He is Gates's creature, and has persuaded him he is a Marlborough. However, if my being out of the way

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will appease him, and promote General Arnold's remaining, I'll go to-morrow."

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Captain Digby had long before this (at infinite pains) procured himself some walnut-juice, with which he intended, when the time should arrive, to transform the natural ruddiness of his countenance into a good mahogany brown, such as is acquired by perseverance in agricultural pursuits. He had also obtained a long-waisted blue coat turned up with sun-bleached buff, which met upon his breast for the space of a single button, and thence retreating, displayed a red waistcoat, which had been cut when George the Second was King. A pair of superannuated sherry-vallies completed this costume, and cost the Captain no little trouble to get into them—he being accustomed to knee-breeches only. These garments, which had belonged to a soldier of one of the New Hampshire regiments engaged on the 19th, Captain Digby had bought of a camp-follower, who had become possessed of them in the manner usual to those human vultures. They were all a thought tight for him, but he had been so fortunate as to procure a pair of coarse leather shoes which fitted him as comfortably as if he had already worn them six months.

The walnut-juice was too precious to be wasted in rehearsals, but he had tried on the garments in presence of Lieutenant Perkins, who considered that the disguise was complete, or would be so, when the walnut-juice came to be added.

"'Pon my soul, Digby, nobody'd ever think as you was a gentleman—'pon my soul, nobody wouldn't!" he exclaimed admiringly. "Yes, that's right—slouch just a leetle more; don't hold up your chin too high; and for God's sake remember to turn your toes in! Though, to be sure," he added, with his head very much on one side, the better to observe the effect, "you could always say as you'd served in a milishy regiment—perhaps, on the whole, 'twould be better to go in for the Canadian reb—I mean Whig. By the bye, perhaps we'd better practise calling 'em Whigs, lest you should ever let t'other word slip out by mistake."

"Patriot's the proper word," observed Fred, endeavouring to move with rustic clumsiness.

"Don't overdo it!" cries his master of deportment. "I should strongly advise you to go in for being a reb—a patriot milishyman—that'll allow you to have a military air. I'm af-fraid you'll never *quite* get rid of your military air," con-

tinued the Lieutenant slowly, with a critical frown. "So you'd better account for it naturally, by saying you're in the Provincial army. By the bye, I s'ppose you'll have your despatches so as you could swallow 'em if you was forced to?"

"I am to take none," says Fred, going warily through various leg-and-arm exercises, by way of making himself at home in his clothes. "Sir Harry knows me, so there's no need. I daresay I shall have to bring something back—that's if I go. 'Tis my belief that General Burgoyne wants to fight it out without help; 'twould mean a coronet for him, if we smashed up the Provincials here, got down to New York, stamping out the rebellion as we went, and then beat Washington on the Delaware. I must get the sergeant's wife to let out this sleeve an inch or so, or I shall split it, to a dead certainty."

So saying, Captain Digby motioned to his friend to assist him in divesting himself of his coat, bidding him for God's sake pull gently.

But greatly to his relief, General Burgoyne seemed to have forgotten him. Captain Campbell departed secretly on the 28th with despatches for Clinton—which did not, however, represent the situation as absolutely desperate; Burgoyne had sent home so glowing an account of his success at Ticonderoga that it was galling indeed to speak of even falling back. Meanwhile, if he had but known it, the rebels had had only forty rounds of ammunition left, on the evening of the 19th! If he had but known it, and had renewed the battle early next morning, before a supply came in! And in the long course of history how many such *Ifs* have there not been!

He did not know this, and he did not know something else—something which, in the Record of Blunder, stands out, one would hope, as unique as it is certainly almost incredible. Burgoyne did not know, that at the very moment when he was anxiously calculating on how near Sir Henry Clinton might be, and buoying himself up with the hope of at any instant hearing his guns on the enemy's flank, the despatch ordering Clinton to march northwards was lying, neatly docketed and tied up with red tape, in a pigeon-hole at Lord George Germaine's office at Whitehall! His lordship had been going down into Kent, and had called at the office on his way, to sign the despatch. It was not fair copied, so—having to meet some friends at dinner—he became impatient, and desired it should be sent down to him. By this means it happened that the

despatch to General Burgoyne, being ready, was sent, while that to Sir William Howe, with the other half of the notable scheme for cutting the rebellion in two, lay forgotten in its pigeon-hole, until somebody happened to find it months afterwards !

The unlucky General had, of course, no suspicion that the hero of Minden had thus sent him to his destruction ; but he had begun of late to fear lest no news might turn out to be bad news. Lincoln had come into the rebel camp with two thousand fresh troops—a cornet, who had been allowed to visit the British lines on parole, thus explained a great shouting which had been heard on the night of the 21st. Burgoyne, moreover, knew that he would soon be as much straitened for provisions as he already was for forage.

In this dilemma, he called a council. Phillips was for fighting again ; Riedesel still advised retreating by Fort George. In order to turn the matter well over in his mind, the harassed General sat up till dawn, playing cards with Lord Balcarres. But he took his resolution—he would go out with a strong force, and get some forage at all hazards ; and if the enemy wanted a battle, he should have one. So at ten next morning, he went up with fifteen hundred men to the high ground on the west from the American lines. There, behind a screen of dense forests, he formed his array, and sent the Rangers, with the loyalists and Indians, to steal round through the woods, and fall on the enemy's rear ; while Riedesel's Germans, the Grenadiers under Major Ackland, Balcarres's Light Infantry, and Williams's Artillery, advanced together towards the American left.

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Gates was in the very act of ordering Colonel Brooks to attack the enemy's rear with three hundred men, when a sergeant came in to say that the whole British army was in motion ; and an aide sent out to report brought back word that some British soldiers were cutting straw in a wheat-field half a mile from Neilson's house—which had been fortified—and that some officers were reconnoitring from the roof of a cabin.

Just then, the Rangers made their attack, and drove the Americans within their lines, where they rallied, and were joined by the Marylanders.

While this was going on, General Arnold, attended by his aides, was at headquarters, evidently much to Gates's annoy-

ance. When Wilkinson came back and reported that the nature of the ground by the wheat-field justified attacking the enemy there, Gates bade him "order out Morgan to begin the game."

"That's nothing," said Arnold, unable to restrain himself any longer; "you must send a strong force."

"General Arnold," replies the Commander-in-Chief, ruffling like a turkey-cock, and glancing at Wilkinson to see if he is doing right,— "I have nothing for you to do, and you have no business here!"

"I think, gentlemen," says Arnold to his aides, "that in that case we had better go," and departs forthwith to his own quarters, in a towering rage; and presently the battle begins without him.

Morgan had requested to be allowed to take the heights on the enemy's right, where Fraser was advancing with five hundred picked men. Poor and Learned were to attack Ackland and his Grenadiers. It was half-past two in the afternoon as they marched, up the slope, in deathly silence, and the game began at once in earnest; but the British fire rained high over the heads of the Provincials, and at first did them little harm.

After a stubborn struggle at the brow of the slope, the Provincials charged among the cannon, and took and re-took one gun four times. The last time, Colonel Cilley leapt on it, and, waving his sword above it, dedicated it to the patriot cause. Major Ackland, severely wounded, was made prisoner, as his friend Captain Simpson was trying to carry him off the field on his back. Major Williams, who commanded the artillery, was also taken, and the artillerymen and grenadiers gave way. Morgan's fierce onset had driven back even Fraser for the moment; but the centre, rallying under Balcarres, held firm. General Burgoyne, himself in the thickest of the fight, did his utmost to strengthen his centre, where Colonel Specht and his Germans were being pressed hard. And so the battle raged all along the British centre, while Fraser on his gray horse was always in the front.

At that moment, there was a great shout all along the American line of "Arnold! Arnold!" It rang above the din and roar of the battle—and so did Arnold's voice, crying,— "Come on! come on! Victory or death!"

CHAPTER L.

GENERAL ARNOLD DOES SOMETHING RASH.

EVER since Gates dismissed him in the morning, Arnold has been fuming in his tent, sending one or other of his aides to bring him word how the day is going; until at last, when the roar of battle reaches him, he can endure it no longer, and orders Warren to be saddled.

"I'll fight in the ranks!" he says. "But the soldiers, God bless them! will follow in my lead!"

As the great black horse and his rider gallop towards the front, General Gates sees them go, and instantly despatches Major Armstrong to order Arnold back,—“lest he should do something rash,” says the General, all of a pucker.

So Armstrong mounts, and gallops off in pursuit, but soon loses sight of horse and rider, as they plunge into the battle.

But though Major Armstrong could not overtake Warren, Noel Branzholm kept close behind his General, until they reached the front, and heard the mighty shout which greeted Arnold, and saw the wavering line of battle gather itself together, ready to follow him to death or victory.

Arnold put himself at the head of Learned's brigade, and led it against the British centre. He fought like a madman, and at his second charge the terrible Hessians broke and fled. But even then Fraser rallied them, and set his line once more in array.

But then Morgan called his best marksmen round him, and asked them if they saw that gallant officer on the iron-gray gelding. “That is General Fraser,” says Braddock's old wagoner. “I admire and honour him—but it is necessary he should die.”

Presently afterwards, there comes a perfect hail of shot about the iron-gray horse, and an aide begs Fraser to withdraw a little, as he is evidently a mark. But he refuses—and five minutes afterwards falls, shot through the body.

With Fraser's fall, a panic seized the whole British line. Burgoyne sent Sir Francis Clerke to order a retreat, but he fell mortally wounded before he could deliver the order, and the moment for a successful retreat was lost, as Arnold formed his men and lead them again to the charge.

Amidst the flame and smoke, and hail of whistling bullets,

Arnold on the great black horse thundered along the line. His voice rang like a trumpet above the battle, still bidding the Provincials conquer or die. The memory of his wrongs, and the thirst for the glory which Gates had tried to snatch from him, goaded him to almost superhuman exertions. He returned to the charge again and again, and with part of Patterson's and Glover's brigades, led the assault on the works still held by Balcarres and the light infantry. At the point of the bayonet, he drove them from a strong *abatis*, and made a desperate attempt to storm the camp. But the light infantry made a stand as desperate. It was after sundown; Major Armstrong, who had now been for two hours vainly trying to get near him, saw Arnold suddenly dash forward to the enemy's right flank, exposed to so terrible a cross-fire that he gave up the chase. As Arnold went, he met Learned's brigade, and gathering up them, and every other brigade he found, he hurled himself once more against the enemy—this time, at an opening in the *abatis*, between Balcarres's light infantry and Breyman's German reserve. The Canadians and loyalists were here. Arnold came up like a whirlwind, and before the incredible fury of his onslaught the defenders at last gave way, and the *abatis* was carried at the point of the bayonet, as Breyman fell mortally wounded.

In that scene of blood and slaughter, Captain Digby, just within the *abatis*, and resolutely disputing every inch of ground, saw an officer's horse shot under him, and in the uncertain light, and the confusion of the assault, thought it was Arnold himself. The officer waved his sword, and rushed on. The ground was encumbered with wounded and dying men, and knee-deep in blood and mire, and the assailants were pouring in at the opening in the *abatis*—but the works themselves might still be defended, and Digby, desperately rallying a handful of the infantry, threw himself between the enemy and the sally-port, making straight for the dismounted officer. He was in the very act of cutting him down, before he saw that it was Noel Branhholm, whose sword had shivered in his hand. Digby instinctively turned the flat of his own sword, or that moment would have been Noel's last; but even so the blow descended on his head with a force which felled him to the ground.

"You hound!" cried Digby, striking up a loyalist's bayonet, "would you strike a wounded man?"

His words were lost in the din. Arnold was at that instant ordering a general assault; and Digby fell slowly back,

hoping that the infantry might yet rally once more—but the Provincials came on with an impetuous rush, which carried everything before them, and the entrenchment was turned. Digby saw that reckless rider on the gallant black horse dashing madly on into the sally-port, and then he himself was caught in the irresistible wave, and though but at the edge of it, was flung down, and, his head coming in contact with part of a gun-carriage, he lay half insensible to bodily pain, while perfectly aware of the sounds of conflict going on all around him.

As Arnold and his brigade rushed within the sally-port, the Germans gave way, discharging a last volley as they retreated. The gallant Warren fell dead under his rider, and at the same instant, a German, lying wounded on the ground, fired point-blank at the General. The shot struck him above the left knee. "Rush on, my brave boys! rush on!" he cried, seeing that his fall was checking the pursuit. A Provincial soldier was running up to bayonet the German, but Arnold called out to him not to hurt him, for he had only done his duty.

As they are lifting the General from his dead horse, Major Armstrong comes up with Gates's order. He is too late to prevent Arnold from doing something rash; but he comes in the very nick of time to help carry him off the field. Having handed him over to the surgeons, Armstrong returns to inform General Gates that the day is won, and finds him deep in an argument with poor Sir Francis Clerke—who has been brought in to die on the General's bed—about the justice of the quarrel between Great Britain and America, and very indignant at his obstinacy. "Did you ever hear such an impudent fellow?" says Gates (adding a more uncivil epithet still), as he steps briskly out, to hear in private what Armstrong has to say.

Generation after generation reads of the deeds of Greek and Trojan,

"Far on the distant plains of windy Troy;"

and, looking into the enchanted distances of Antiquity, imagines, —according to the spirit of its age—either that there have been no heroes since Ajax and Diomedes, or else that the heroes never lived at all save in a poet's dream. Yet the charge of Benedict Arnold at Saratoga is as Homeric as anything in Homer; and the story of the two battles, and of the whole Canadian campaign, is as worthy to be told as the story of any of the wars of Greece or Rome.

Vixerunt post Agamemnona fortes.

CHAPTER LI.

THE DAY AFTER SARATOGA.

CAPTAIN DIGBY's skull was of uncommon strength, and he soon managed to collect his scattered senses sufficiently to take advantage of the darkness which was rapidly spreading over the field, and endeavour to regain the British camp.

It was midnight when he reached his quarters, his face covered with blood and dust, his whole body bruised and sore, and his mind so confused and bewildered, that he could not shake off the constantly-recurring idea that he was in a very disagreeable dream—from which, however, it was impossible to awaken.

That was a terrible night. General Fraser lay dying in a room at Taylor's. He was to have dined there with the Riedesels, after the reconnaissance! The Baroness had to clear away her dining-table, already laid, to make room for his bed—expecting every moment to see her own husband brought in in like manner. As the hours of the night wear on, and old Simon Fraser's forfeited coronet grows dim to his son's failing eyes, the Baroness (hushing her children in a corner, that they may not disturb him) hears him say to himself,—“Poor General Burgoyne! oh, my poor wife! oh, fatal ambition!” Mr. Brudenel, the chaplain, reads prayers to him. At three in the morning, they say he cannot last long, and the Baroness takes her children downstairs, and spends the rest of the night trying to comfort Lady Harriet Ackland, who is in an agony about her husband. Poor Fraser lingers till eight in the morning—sending many times to apologise for all the inconvenience he is causing her in being so long in dying.

As soon as poor General Fraser has been laid out, the ladies and children return to the room. The living cannot spare much space to the dead; the house is crowded with wounded officers. The Baroness does what she can for them—but the cannonade has begun again, and every one is saying, We must retreat this very night.

Captain Digby, who had refused to return himself as wounded—protesting that all he wanted was some sticking-plaster—had lain down to snatch a little sleep. It seemed to him that he had but just forgotten himself, when he was

awakened by some one shaking him pretty roughly, and, starting up as hastily as his stiffness allowed him, found that his disturber was a sergeant of his old regiment, who, with his head enveloped in bandages, and one arm in a splint, looked very much the worse for wear.

"Beg your honour's pardon," said the man, saluting; "but Lieutenant Perkins, he's been very bad all night—the doctors say he can't last, and he's very wishful to see you, sir. I've been here once afore, but you was a-sleeping so sweet, I hadn't the heart to wake you. But the Lieutenant, he's a-gettin' impatient, and the doctor told me to go for you, so I hope your honour will be good enough to excuse——"

"Of course! of course! Where is he?" cried Fred, struggling stiffly to his feet and beginning to put on his coat.

The Lieutenant was lying in a kind of outhouse, close by Taylor's, where General Fraser lay dead. His face was pinched and drawn. He had been shot through the lungs, and his breath came in short gasps.

"Digby,"—he said, holding out one of his restless hands to his friend, "it's all up with me."

"Don't talk like that," replied Fred, greatly affected; "you mustn't give up——"

Poor Perkins smiled a ghastly smile. "Don't you hear how I'm breathing?" he said. "The old church-clock at home used to creak just like that, when it was running down. I'm running down, Digby. I wouldn't have minded if we'd beat 'em; and yet 'tis strange how peaceful I feel—I bear 'em no ill-will. 'Do your duty, my dear boy,' says my poor father, when he took leave of me, 'to your God and your King'—and if we'd only beat 'em, Digby——"

"My dear fellow, don't distress yourself—we shall beat 'em yet," cries Digby.

"Not with this army," says the dying man sadly, "and you know it, Digby. This army's doomed. Poor General Burgoyne! I said we was in a mess, you know. They won't believe it in England."

"I can't believe it myself!" cried Fred, his voice hoarse and broken—"it seems like a nightmare! We was all jubilation only t'other day. But Clinton *must* be close to us—if we can but hold on a few days——"

"I shall not be here to see," said the poor young fellow; "but you may live to go home to England——"

Then he began to talk of his father and mother, and made Digby take a solemn oath to go himself and see them, and tell them how he died.

"Write to them for me," he said; "write as soon as I am dead, if you can. But if you live to get home, you must go and see them."

Digby listened with the most careful attention to all the messages his dying friend gave him, and tried desperately hard to remember the names of the nine brothers and sisters, to each of whom poor Perkins sent a separate message.

"Be sure and tell 'em I remembered 'em all, and mentioned all their names," he said; "but whatever you do, don't forget to tell Susan I thought of her at the last; she's my youngest sister, and we was always uncommon fond of one another. Remember—Susan—I used to call her black-eyed Susan—but her eyes is just the same colour as mine."

The Lieutenant said a great deal more than this, and repeated the most important parts many times over; but it was easy enough to see that his life was fast going out of him.

"The doctors said I wasn't to move," he said wearily; "but I'm so uneasy—and it makes no difference. Perhaps if you was to shift me a little—a little higher——"

As Fred did it, a tear dropped from his eye on to the dying man's face.

"It may be best as it is," whispered the poor lad, pressing his friend's hand, and fixing his patient eyes on his; "but I shouldn't like 'em to forget me. If we'd beat, I should have liked to have a tablet put up in the church—there's one to a Captain that fell at Minden—'In the arms of victory,' it says——"

"There shall be one, if I put it myself!" says Fred, his tears coming faster at this; "and as for victory, I don't believe as there was ever a harder-fought battle than yesterday's——"

"Tell my father that," says Perkins, closing his eyes; then opening them again for a moment he adds,—"If you're sent to General Clinton, Digby, be sure you don't overdo it!"

Just then Mr. Brudenel, the Chaplain to the artillery, came in to pray with the dying man. Digby waited outside, until Mr. Brudenel came out, his eyes very red.

"The poor fellow begged me to desire you to go in to him in five minutes or so," says the Chaplain. "Oh, Captain Digby, what heart-rending sights have I not seen since yesterday!"

Fred waited the five minutes, and then went in, and found his friend lying with so natural and peaceful an expression in his eyes, that he did not see for a moment that the soul had gone out of them.

Captain Digby closed his friend's eyes, and cut off some locks of his hair—to be carried to that Northamptonshire village, if he should ever set foot on English ground again. And then, before he had well finished these last offices of friendship, a hasty message came for him to go instantly to headquarters.

Worn out with fatigue and anxiety, the unfortunate General had been persuaded to take a few moments' rest, and had fallen asleep on a bench. As Fred entered he started up, hastily asking what was the matter? Fred never forgot the terrible anxiety in his face, or the expression of relief, as General Phillips said—

"'Tis only Captain Digby, sir; you ordered him to be sent for."

* * * * *

They bury General Fraser at six that evening, in the great redoubt, according to his last request to Burgoyne, and—according also to that request—without any pomp. Only Burgoyne, Phillips, Riedesel, and the officers of his own family, stand round the grave—while the shots from the enemy's guns plough up the ground, and sprinkle Mr. Brudenel with dust as he reads the service; the Baroness hears his voice, rising solemnly above the cannonade, as she watches just below—in terror lest one of the balls should strike her husband. And so Burgoyne, his heart nearly broken for the loss of his beloved friend, leaves him on the dark hill-top and instantly begins his retreat—bitterly deploring Fraser, and talking of that masterly retreat he made in the Seven Years' War, with only five hundred Chasseurs, in the sight of the whole French army.

But, as has been agreed, Captain Digby, in the disguise he had so carefully rehearsed with poor Perkins, slips away in the darkness, and happily getting past one of the enemy's pickets, is well on his way before the rain comes on—which it soon does in torrents. He is to make for Albany with his utmost speed, charged with a verbal message to Sir Henry Clinton, that unless General Burgoyne be instantly relieved, there will be nothing for him but surrender.

CHAPTER LII.

A MESSENGER OF EVIL TIDINGS.

WHILE General Gates was thus covering himself with glory at Saratoga, Lord Cornwallis and the British Grenadiers were marching into Philadelphia.

Ever since Captain Digby's departure for Canada, to join the Northern expedition, there had been a conviction among the military authorities in New York that now the rebellion would collapse; and the first news from Canada confirmed this opinion. Meanwhile Sir William Howe had opened his own campaign, and Lord Cornwallis's successful skirmish at Quibbletown, in June, was looked on as only the prelude to the occupation of Philadelphia—and gave occasion to Captain André to observe to Miss Digby, that her brother had perhaps been in too great a hurry to snap at the Northern campaign, since we was like to have quite as pretty a victory here, without going all the way to Canada for it.

But Mr. Washington was to be neither provoked nor enticed into leaving his strong position on the hills by Middlebrook, so Sir William returned to Amboy, and prepared to embark—where for, was a question which kept the provinces in terror, from Boston in Massachusetts to Charleston in South Carolina, for many a week after his transports had disappeared off the Capes of Delaware. The whole country held its breath. The eagles were hovering somewhere in the heights of the sky—but the eye could not follow them, nor guess where they would swoop down! Was Sir William going to help Burgoyne? Or to lay waste the Carolinas once more? Or—and this was the most likely guess—was Philadelphia's own hour come at last?

Great were the searchings of heart, and packings of household goods—the comings and goings—the flying rumours—the panics—and perhaps, the secret rejoicings—that August in Philadelphia. General Washington came in from the camp once or twice, and dined on one occasion with Congress—some members of which may have felt a little uneasiness in meeting his eye. There was, however, at this dinner so interesting a guest, that if the intriguers did not look often at Washington, no one would have observed it—the young Marquess La Fayette

was there, whose father fell at Minden, and who had just come over from France, to offer his sword to the cause of Liberty.

General Branzholm had made arrangements—in which Mr. Marshall had much assisted him—for sending his wife to a house at Lancaster, if the enemy should threaten the city.

The news of the loss of Ticonderoga had been quickly followed by that of Harkeimer's surprise at Oriskany; and those who had all along secretly favoured the royal cause, now hardly took the trouble to conceal their opinions, and maliciously reminded their Whig neighbours that this was the Year with Three Gibbets—alluding to the three sevens—and advised them to look to their necks. To this, the Whigs would retort by bringing up an old prophecy, attributed to Peden the Prophet, which said that when Three Sevens should come together, a star of the first magnitude would fall from the crown of Great Britain. These dark words of the inspired old Covenanter were pretty much all the Whigs had to bolster up their courage with, while Burgoyne was marching gaily down on the Hudson, and Sir William Howe was advancing on Philadelphia from the Head of Elk. Letters began to be handed about—addressed to Congress, but obviously intended (like some prayers) for all who chose to listen. Lists of names, written in feigned hands, were privately circulated, to show how strong was the King's party in Pennsylvania. And, to complete the discouragement of the Whigs, the only useful result of Sullivan's foolish expedition against the loyalists of Staten Island—was the capture of the papers of the Quakers' Yearly Meetings for the two years last past. These papers made such a revelation of correspondence with the enemy, that the Council of Philadelphia arrested no less than a score of the leading citizens—and, on their refusal to give any promise of allegiance to the United Colonies, packed them off then and there to Staunton in Virginia, quoting the suspension of *Habeas Corpus* as their precedent.

* * * * *

It was just after this that General Branzholm contrived to come in for a hasty interview with his wife—which might, as she knew, be a last farewell.

Mrs. Branzholm next saw her husband one Sunday morning, as he rode along Chestnut Street at the head of his brigade, the long column of General Washington's army coming behind—pioneers with spades and axes, trumpeters, horse and foot, trains of artillery—a ragged rout for the most part, but stepping

out soldierly to the music, and carrying their well-burnished arms like men who knew how to use them. They made a brave show in the unwarlike eyes of the Philadelphians, though the only apology for regimentals were the hunting-shirts of the Virginians, and the sprig of green which His Excellency had ordered each man to put in his cap—to give the troops some sort of uniformity in the eyes of the young French Marquess, fresh from the *Grande Armée*. Bravely they marched; the Whigs began to pluck up heart again as they saw them—especially as the news had just come of Starke's victory at Bennington.

General Branzholm saw his wife, and saluted her and Mary—with a gallant smile, which nearly broke their hearts. There was many such a salute made that day, and many were the eyes that looked their last, to the bray of trumpet and beat of drum, as the columns passed up Chestnut Street, and out to the Wilmington Road. With the artillery, came Jasper, riding on the same side of the street as that on which his mother and cousin stood—so near, indeed, that he spoke to them as he passed. "Keep a good heart, mother," he cried, smiling cheerily—they could hear no more for the grinding of the artillery-carriage wheels—and then he too rode on up the long straight street, and was gone.

Mrs. Branzholm bore up bravely, till the last ranks of the rear-guard were diminishing specks, far beyond Central Square—and then she fell sobbing on Mary's neck, exclaiming that the lot of women was hard indeed, and wildly wishing herself at Oglethorpe, in those old days of Indian panics, when they might at least have died together.

Two days after this, news came that Sir William Howe had landed in Maryland—then that he had passed the Head of Elk, and was marching straight on Philadelphia. And then, early one morning, the city was awakened by a hollow sound, which rose and swelled, and died away—like the roar of far-distant breakers on a sandy beach; and all who heard it started from their sleep, and listened trembling—for these were the waves of war, which they had so long seen rising higher and higher, and which now were about to overwhelm them at last.

For hours that sound went on—boom—boom. The people gathered in the streets and open spaces, in pale-faced groups, listening and waiting. These groups generally divided by tacit consent into two parties, who stood aloof from each other—

sometimes casting angry or reproachful glances, but seldom exchanging words. It was too late for reproach, and too soon for exultation. Now and then, some one would remark to his neighbour that it must be many miles off; and the neighbour would shake his head, and perhaps observe that sounds in that district did indeed travel far—but add that twenty miles was as much as it could be. And meanwhile the clouds had gathered black and lowering, and about mid-day broke in a furious tempest—heaven's artillery out-thundering the distant battle. Mrs. Branhholm wandered about the house unable to rest a moment; she seemed not to heed the lightning which terrified Mary. It was only in June that Christ Church steeple had been struck; and as the storm came lower and lower, and wrapped the city in cloud and flame Mary thought the Judge-mountain Day could scarcely be more terrible.

The storm ceased before sundown, and every one went out into the streets—longing, and yet afraid, to ask if any news had come. Mrs. Branhholm and Mary put on their calashes and went up Chestnut Street—passing a group in the midst of which Mr. Roberts was complacently nodding his broad brim at a well-dressed man in a laced hat, who seemed to be laying down the law. Mary caught the words, “folly—absolute madness—who but madmen could have ever been so infatuated as to imagine,”—when the clatter of horse-hoofs coming from the direction of the Schuykil made everybody look round, and the next instant everybody set off running after the horseman—who had galloped past, and was turning down Fourth Street. Mary ran too, but Fourth Street was half full of people by the time she got to the *Indian Queen*, where the horseman had drawn rein. The people ran up from all directions, and pressed round the messenger, who seemed a plain sort of countryman, and had evidently ridden hard.

“What news? What news?” cried the little schoolmaster—running up breathless without a hat, and pushing his silver spectacles on to the very top of his wig. “Speak out, man! and speak up so as we can all hear you!”

“Give a man time to wash the dust out of his throat,” returned the messenger hoarsely, as he took a mug of spruce beer from the landlord. “Mine ain’t such good news,” he said, when he had drained it, and was wiping his mouth on his coat-sleeve, “as that I’m in such an everlasting hurry to tell it. I warn’t in the battle myself—but I’ve seen them as was—an’ I’ve

talked to some o' the Quakers as come out at Birmingham an' Dilworth, an' got real mixed up with the Britishers. There's been fightin' off an' on, at the Forks o' Brandywine and Chadds' Ford, since daybreak this mornin'—but there was such a thick fog, one side couldn't hardly make out what t'other side was up to, an' I can't tell you nothin' o' the manoeuvres—but there was some pretty hard poundin' jest above Birmingham Meetin'-House this afternoon—and Gen'ral Washington's been drove back—and the French Markis is wounded—and the roads is all full o' people takin' away their goods."

This messenger of evil tidings had but little to add to this confused account, but he had told enough. There were many wounded—Birmingham Meeting-House was crowded with them, and the Quakers were giving them assistance. "Which," added the messenger, "is mighty well in its way—but ef they hadn't ha' been on the enemy's side, Gen'ral Howe wouldn't ha' been so nigh to Philadelphia as he is this day. Who, I should like to know, showed him the roads, an' kep' back information from our Gen'als—*ef* not the Quakers?"

At this, there was an angry murmur—overborne instantly by the women eagerly asking if he knew who was hurt? But to this he could give no reply. The French Marquess was shot in the leg, and General Sullivan's division had suffered most—that was all he knew. He had come off on the first horse he could borrow—his own having been impressed for the artillery—and if he had waited, he would not have been able to come at all.

Here a member of Congress, who had been listening quietly for some time, desired the messenger to step inside the inn and speak with him; and it was presently all over the town that Congress was to sit all night, and remove to-morrow to Lancaster.

CHAPTER LIII.

CAPTAIN DIGBY ARRIVES AT FORT MONTGOMERY.

CAPTAIN DIGBY had the good fortune to escape capture by any of the scouting parties which hung on the skirts of the retreating army; but with his utmost exertions it was not till the second night that, footsore and jaded, he reached Albany. It still rained in torrents—and it was well for him that the urgency

of the message he bore had hitherto made him resist the temptation to take the rest he so much needed. But he felt that weariness was fast getting the better of him, and he began to look about him for a shelter for the night.

It was long after nightfall, and the dark narrow streets were silent and deserted. His footsteps, splashing in the pools of rain, sounded so loud that he expected every moment to hear a casement flung open, and a voice asking—"Who goes there?" But if any one heard him pass, no one cared to look out into the driving rain, to see who it might be. He went on, treading as gingerly as possible, and cursing the deep-gabled houses, from whose eaves the rain spouted down in fountains, half drenching the unwary foot-passenger.

Down a side street, he observed a light streaming out at an open half-door, and, venturing nearer, saw that the place was a kind of tavern. It stood at the end of the street, and all beyond was darkness. A burst of laughter came from within, just as Digby reached the door. He stood still, and listened for a moment.

"If he ain't hangt yet, hangt he will be, just zo zhur's he's a Britisher," a man was saying, with a strong Low-Dutch accent. "Look you, he was gondennded out of his own mout. 'Dack me to Gin'ral Glington,' zays he, uz bold uz brass. He dedn't know uz ther wuz a Gin'ral Glington on our zide, he dedn't! Bud he wouldn't never ha' gonvessed—on'y when they made him zwaller the 'medic, he wuz vooiced vur to bring up the zilver bulled, uz hadt god the ladder inzide it. I sholt ha' liked to ha' zeed him, when he zaw the wrong Gin'ral Glington hadt god holdt of him!"

There was another laugh at this—highly agreeable, as may be supposed, to the eavesdropper outside.

"Arl the same," said another voice, "'tis a tarnation pity as t'other Gen'ral Clinton should ha' taken the Forts, an' ef so be as he was to get up as fur as here, he might spile arl yet."

Captain Digby took the opportunity of retiring from his post of observation, under cover of a hot discussion which followed—but he had heard enough to show him that General Burgoyne's situation was already known, and that the sooner he left Albany behind him the better—while at the same time the hope of very soon falling in with friends made him for a moment forget his weariness.

But two or three more miles of an execrable road, on a

dark and rainy night, convinced him that he was pretty nearly dead-beat ; and when he saw a dim light glimmering at a little distance from the road, up the slope of the hill, he resolved to risk something for a night's rest. Where there was a house, there might be a barn. He still had a lump of raw pork in his pocket, remaining from the slender store of provisions he had brought with him ; and with this and a few hours' sleep he thought he could hold out till he reached the advancing British force. He stumbled up the steep slope—it was much too dark to find a footway, if any there were ; but he was by this time by no means sure that he had so much as kept the high road—even hemmed in as it was by the hilly nature of the country. He cautiously approached the house, which seemed to have no upper storey—as its roof descended almost to the level of the top of the window. Fortunately, the curtain was drawn aside, and a candle was set in the window-sill, where it flickered and guttered so furiously, that it was the light of the fire burning on the hearth which chiefly enabled him to see the interior. It was a large low room, furnished like a kitchen, and with a brick floor. A clock ticked in a corner, and above a large brass-handled press there hung a fowling-piece of a very antique pattern. The usual hams and bags of dried herbs were suspended from the beam. Beside the hearth, stood an arm-chair, with a patchwork cushion, and by it an old-fashioned spinning-wheel. The only living object in the room was a large black cat, which lay comfortably curled up on a narrow many-coloured hearth-rug.

The Captain, shivering and hungry as he was, saw all these homely arrangements with more envy than he had ever felt in the most sumptuous dining-hall he had ever entered, and took a particular interest in a huge yellow pitcher—which, with a gay mug beside it, stood on the dresser, together with a plate of what looked like sausages. Just as Captain Digby was straining his eyes, to see if they *were* sausages, a noise made him draw back, and an old woman, carrying an armful of wood, came in at a door, which he had observed stood open. The old woman, who wore a white cap and a short lindsey petticoat, stepped up to the side of the hearth, and let the wood fall with a rattle which frightened the cat, who instantly took refuge on the chair. Fred saw the old woman stroke the cat, and began to take courage. As he was cautiously leaving the window, the old woman went to the dresser, took up the sausages, and, shak-

ing her head, was evidently about to carry them away. This, Fred thought, looked mightily as though she were alone in the house—and he thereupon made haste to knock at the door. There was no answer.

Perhaps, thought he, the old lady may be deaf; so, first taking off his hat—that he might the more obviously appear as a suppliant—he tried the latch. It was fast—but the noise he made attracted her attention this time, and, in another moment, he heard a trembling voice hurriedly call out,—“Who’s there?”

“Only a poor traveller, mother, who’s got benighted and lost his way,” returned Fred.

“How many of you is there?” asked the old woman from within.

“I’m alone—put your head out of window, and look at me if you’re afraid to let me in first,” said poor Fred, whose teeth were chattering with cold.

The window was accordingly opened, and the old lady looked out, candle in hand; but the wind blew out the candle, and she said peevishly,—“I can’t tell what you’re like, I’m sure; but, as you’re alone, I’ll let you in till my sons come back—they’ll be here directly. I thought you was them.”

As she unbarred the door, Fred anxiously wondered whether this was true, or was merely said *in terrorem*.

Once inside, he began to give the account of himself which he had prepared during many solitary hours of his perilous journey. But first he artfully found out which side the old lady was on, by asking why she had been so afraid to let him in? He had approached the hearth as he said this, and began ostentatiously to dry himself, by way of convincing his hostess that his only object was shelter.

“Why was I afraid?” she said, when Fred had repeated his question. “Why, where do you come from, not to know as the Hessians are comin’, burnin’ all the towns as they go?”

“Then you’re a friend to me, mother,” said Fred, speaking as distinctly as his chattering teeth would allow him. “I’ve got a message from General Gates to General Putnam, and I want to get down to Peekskil—but I’m pretty well wore out with cold and hunger, and if you’ve got a barn you’ll let me sleep in——”

“There’s my son’s bed you can have—I dare to say Zachary won’t come back to-night—if you reely air on a message to

General Putnam"—said the old woman, looking at him doubtfully. "I took you for a Hessian, that a' did, when I first clapped eyes on you. They say they're arl big men—I've seed folks as has seed 'em. But they du say as they've got double teeth all round."

It was probably very fortunate for Captain Digby that his hostess was hard of hearing—it made conversation more difficult indeed, but also very much more safe. Any indiscreet expression was much less likely to catch the old lady's attention—and awkward questions can be answered at the top of one's voice with much greater ease than in one's ordinary tones. Thus, when the old lady asked her guest whether it was true that General Gates had beat the Britishers? Fred was able to shout back that the Britishers was pretty much drove into a corner, that there would be great news before many days—and that he must say no more to any one but General Putnam. He rang the changes on these and a few other phrases as vague, until the old lady imagined she had been told a great deal, and even fancied that a secret had been confided to her—for Captain Digby earnestly impressed upon her, that if she did not wish him and his information to fall into the hands of the Britishers, she must not say a word about him to a living soul. Such an impression did he finally make upon her patriotism and her motherly kindness, that on his refusal to throw down his clothes from the loft where he was to sleep, for her to dry them—on the perfectly true pretext that if he once took them off he would never be able to get into them again—she went to the press, and got out an old suit with which she presented him, assuring him that Zachary would approve of his having it, when he knew the errand he was on.

Before this, however, the Captain had consumed the sausages, which his deluded hostess informed him had been set aside in case Zachary should return to supper. To the Captain's great joy, she added mysteriously,—

"But he said it might be two days afore he come home—how'sever, the candle's there to show him the way."

It appeared that Zachary had been at the battle of Long Island, but had escaped, bringing home with him a cannon ball,—which he had observed lying idle somewhere, and had thought his mother could pound meat with. Zachary, remarked his fond mother, was always full of notions, and the cannon ball—she produced it for her guest's admiration—was an un-

common handy thing, and made the meat a deal tenderer than a common rolling-pin.

Having devoured Zachary's supper, and emptied the pitcher (which contained nothing more heady than buttermilk), Captain Digby climbed up his ladder, and, joyfully divesting himself of his sodden clothes, put on Zachary's habiliments in their stead—thereby making the discovery that that eminent patriot was considerably shorter than himself, but so fully made up for his brevity by his breadth, that the Captain could not honestly say he had lost by the exchange. Meanwhile, to be in a dry skin once more was in itself a luxury so great, that a few inches too many or too few were a very minor consideration indeed. Captain Digby ascertained that the ladder could be drawn up after him, and drew it up accordingly; and, jumping into Zachary's flock-bed, had just time to reflect that the window could not be more than ten or eleven feet from the ground, before he was fast asleep.

Fred awoke in the cold and drizzly dawn—much refreshed, but so stiff, that he feared at first he might be absolutely unable to pursue his journey. He, however, slipped into Zachary's coat, and, with great pain and inconvenience, descended from the loft, having first made sure that his hostess (whom he heard astir below) was talking to no more dangerous companion than her cat. The good woman had prepared for her guest a bowl of hot buttermilk and some generous slices of bread. On seeing him, she burst out laughing.

"Well, *tu* be sure!" she exclaimed, pausing with uplifted spoon, as she stirred the pot on the fire, "now they're on you, they don't look no more like Zachary's nor a rail's like a mop-head! How he would laugh, *tu* be sure! Well, sit by, sit ye by, and eat whilst ye can—I doubt Gen'ral Gates's message'll have to be in a hurry."

Fred observed with great satisfaction that he had so effectually conveyed to his hostess's mind the importance of his mission, that she was disposed to hurry him off; and he took care to second her efforts to speed the parting guest. He scalded himself severely in his haste, but he got clear off before Zachary or any one else appeared.

As he went on, the country seemed strangely deserted, and the replies which he received from the few persons he met (and who were mostly old or infirm) explained this. Governor Clinton was assembling the militia at New Windsor, to oppose the

march of the British. It was with a lively dread of making the same fatal mistake as the unfortunate person whose fate he had heard discussed at Albany, that Digby plodded on—often leaving the road (such as it was) and making detours to avoid towns and villages, where he might have been questioned too closely.

By these necessary diversions, and the extreme caution with which he was obliged to proceed, he lost so much time, that night overtook him when he was, as near as he could guess, ten miles from Kingston. He resolved, however, to push on, as the least danger, now that he must be near friends. Several wagons loaded with household effects had met him during the day; but the Dutch farmers who drove them had only stayed to ask if there was any news from above? and, on Digby's replying that Gates had got the Britishers fast in a trap, had rejoined that if he was not quick, their friends would come and let them out.

Another such wagon came lumbering along, shortly after nightfall. Leading the horses, walked an elderly man holding a lantern, and of him Fred ventured to ask what news from below?

"The Britishers have burnt Esopus," was the reply. "Governor Clinton's coming up after 'em, they say, with a few men as he's got together, an' my son-in-law's joined him—more fool he. What good does he think *he* can do, agin King's soldiers, and men o' war?"

The old fellow went on grumbling to himself, long after he had passed Digby—while a shrill female voice called from the back part of the wagon,—“If you see anything of one Seelah Perry, tell him his wife's gone up to Albany!”

Digby soon after this passed what seemed to be a deserted house, and some way farther on, another. He ate the last morsel of the bread-cake which the old woman had given him at parting, and pushed boldly on for Kingston, which he passed through safely—and, about noon next day, was so happy as to answer the challenge of General Vaughan's sentinels, just above the smoking ruins of Esopus. Sir James Wallace's flying squadron lay in the river (having destroyed the boom at Fort Montgomery), and Captain Digby was at once sent down in an armed sloop to communicate his intelligence to Sir Henry Clinton.

What then was the Captain's astonishment and disgust, on arriving at the camp at Fort Montgomery, and describing General Burgoyne's situation to Sir Henry, in the most moving terms he

was master of, to be coolly informed that 'twas impossible he could do more than send General Vaughan's detachment and Sir James Wallace's squadron as high up the river as possible, to strike terror! He had received no precise orders whatever as to General Burgoyne, added Sir Henry, seeing Captain Digby's blank dismay—had merely been told to act as circumstances should direct; and Sir William Howe wanted all the force that could be safely spared from New York. How could he act in two directions at once? He asked this question somewhat peevishly of Colonel Beverley Robinson, who was present.

"But, sir, General Burgoyne has been counting on your co-operation all along," faltered poor Fred. "We all thought that was the plan; and indeed, sir, if you can't instantly make some very powerful diversion in his favour, he is undone!"

"Zounds, sir! what do you mean by counting on my co-operation?" cried Sir Henry angrily. "D—— it, sir! I don't understand you! Is it my fault if your General has allowed himself to be entangled in the extraordinary manner you describe? When he saw the enemy was in force, why the devil did he cross the Hudson? Plan? There was no plan—I was to do as I could—act with Sir William on Philadelphia, or go northwards, according as things might turn out; but there was no plan. We was left to follow our discretion—and when news comes that General Burgoyne is sweeping the rebels all before him, why the devil should we go to help him? answer me that, sir?"

"We all thought, sir," stammered Fred, "as Lord George Germaine had wrote to the General, that you was to act in concert——"

But at the mention of Lord George, Sir Henry became fairly purple with fury.

He explained, with a great deal of very bad language, that he saw it all now—that this was a plot, and that Lord George was bent on his ruin, to save his own cursed cowardly skin. He cursed his own weakness in having suffered himself to be cajoled out of demanding the satisfaction due to a gentleman, for his garbling his despatch about Sullivan's Island, when he had gone all the way to England to get it—and swore he would have it yet. Meantime, he could do no more for General Burgoyne than he was already doing. Since he left New York, he had received a letter from Sir William Howe, informing him that Mr. Washington had made an ugly attempt to surprise him at Germantown, on the morning of the 4th, and

bidding him be ready to send him six thousand men as a reinforcement, the instant his brother the Admiral should have opened the Delaware.

"So I hope you see, sir," continued Sir Henry—observing the blank disappointment depicted on Captain Digby's countenance—"that 'tis out of the question I can march a force so far beyond Albany. Mr. Washington's army must be much more formidable than was represented to us. Indeed—though Sir William makes as light of this last affair as he can—'tis easy to see that they had a narrow squeak for it. We shall lose Philadelphia next, if I set off on a wild-goose chase after General Burgoyne!"

CHAPTER LIV.

A LETTER FROM BOSTON.

WHEN, in after years, Althea Digby looked back on the weeks immediately preceding and following Sir John Burgoyne's catastrophe, she could never quite disentangle the confusion with which the events of that time had succeeded each other. And indeed the inconsequent contradictions of a dream are hardly more perplexing than were the extraordinary alternations of fortune crowded into that brief space of time.

After Sir William Howe had sailed away, leaving Sir Henry Clinton in command at New York, nothing worth mentioning happened for many weeks, except the arrival of news from the North. Captain André was gone with General Gray, whose aide he now was; but Althea observed to Mrs. Maverick that she was afraid he would hardly envy Fred so easy a triumph—though, to be sure, 'twas not likely Mr. Washington's ragged regiments would give much more trouble than these cowardly Northern levies.

It was near a month after this, that the news came that Mr. Washington's ragged regiments had been driven back at the Forks of Brandywine, and that Wayne had been surprised and almost destroyed by General Gray. Just at this time, a rumour first got about in New York (no one knew how), that Sir John Burgoyne had fallen into an ambush. Mr. Justice Jones heard some people talking it over in the street, as he was on his way to call on Mrs. Maverick.

"A pack of gossiping fools! If indeed they aint rather

rebels—as I shrewdly suspect,” said the Judge, when he had mentioned the circumstance. “I threatened ’em with the Provost, if I ever caught ’em again trying to spread false news. And what d’ye think one of ’em has the impudence to reply ? ‘The bloodhound Cunningham’s gone to follow his accursed trade in Philadelphia,’ says the insolent rascal, ‘so I hope we shan’t see honest patriots being murdered here any more, for one while.’ Think of that, Ma’am ! There’s impudence for you ! The fellow ought to stand in the pillory. But here’s *Gaine’s Mercury*, with the account of Lord Cornwallis’s entry into Philadelphia. Quite a triumph, Miss Digby—all the windows full of people dressed in their best—loyal addresses—demonstrations, and I don’t know what. Everybody was delighted to see ’em. A little boy ran up to shake hands with one of the grenadiers. Ah, they know their true friends !”

The next news which came, was that of the battle of Germantown, an affair in which Mr. Washington very nearly indeed got the better of Sir William Howe. But for the fog, which here, as at the Brandywine, hindered the rebels from seeing the advantages they had gained—and, misled by which, they mistook each other more than once for the enemy—but for this, and for the grand mistake of stopping to cannonade Mr. Chew’s house, Philadelphia would probably have been retaken then and there, and Sir William’s retreat cut off. But all is well that ends well. Lord Cornwallis arrived in time, and—though the rebels saved their artillery; and there was no pursuit—was able to claim a victory.

Meanwhile, Sir Henry Clinton had gone up the Hudson, as soon as the reinforcements arrived from England. Having sailed in Dutch bottoms, by the provident care of the Authorities at home, they had been three months on the voyage, and came just too late for Sir Henry’s expedition to save poor General Burgoyne. But no one in New York knew this—nor did any one in the expedition know what news Sir Henry had received, by the messenger who reached him just as he was landing at Howe’s Point. Ill news usually travels apace, but no news whatever had been heard of General Burgoyne since that ugly rumour—which, of course, no one believed. By the time Sir Henry Clinton returned to New York, however, these rumours had grown uglier ; and a few days afterwards a report got all over the town, that General Burgoyne and his whole army had surrendered themselves prisoners-of-war.

Although this was no more than Captain Digby expected,

it may easily be imagined that it much afflicted him. Happening the same day to be passing with several other officers in front of the hospital (where some of the prisoners were confined), he heard a loud voice call out, that "General Burgoyne had marched to Boston to the tune of *Yankee Doodle*,"—and, looking up, saw a very powerfully-built man leaning out of an upper window. Digby's companions swore heartily at this piece of insolence, and had the perpetrator (who was no other than that turbulent rebel, Colonel Ethan Allen) clapped in irons for it.

Long before this, Althea had heard enough from her brother to prepare her for the worst. She had wept heartily as he told her about poor Lieutenant Perkins—whom she remembered in Boston as a mischievous but amiable young fellow, with usually some practical joke on hand. Althea shed tears, too, when Fred—with a few slight extenuations, but truthfully in the main—narrated his unintentional single-combat with Noel Branhholm, of the issue of which he was of course ignorant.

Among all these exciting alternations of fortune, one event, however, stood out distinct in her memory—like a monument of pain. One of the irregular posts, which kept up some kind of inter-communication between New England and the Southern Provinces, brought Mrs. Maverick a letter from a friend in Boston. It arrived one afternoon in November. It had been nearly three weeks on its way, and was dated October 17—the very day, if the writer had but known it, of the Convention of Saratoga. Mrs. Maverick's correspondent was a lawyer, and an old crony of her late husband's. He had espoused the popular side, but had continued to manage her affairs, and great part of the letter was taken up with details as to how he had been attending to her interests in her absence—how he had let her house in King Street to a family whose own residence in Charlestown had been destroyed—and how he had brought influence to bear on Mr. Hancock, to prevent the sequestration of certain property of hers at Cambridge.

"We hear the most conflicting reports from Canada," added the writer, when he had thus given an account of his stewardship,—“nothing less than the total destruction of one or other army. Fortune seems to be playing at see-saw with us. No sooner did we hear that Ticonderoga was abandoned without a blow struck, and St. Clair run away into the woods, than there comes news of Starke's victory at Bennington. And close on the heels of our reverses (as you must let me call them) on the

Delaware, we hear that Gates and Arnold have fought a great battle by the Hudson, and cut off Burgoyne's retreat. You would scarce know Boston—'tis true the streets are no longer deserted—but we are for ever asking each other what's the news from Canada, from New York, from Philadelphia? I heard an anecdote to'other day, will do for your next tea-drinking—'tis authentic. Mr. J——n A——s, riding over Boston Neck, meets a horse-jockey, who, recognising our little great man, cries, out of the fulness of his heart,—‘Oh, Mr. A——s! what great things have you done for us! we can never be grateful enough—there's no Courts of Justice now in this Province, and I hope there never will be another!’ Which mightily disconcerts Mr. A——s, who, being a lawyer himself, had never, you may swear, intended this. Admit 'tis magnanimous in me to tell it you—but indeed, 'tis too rich a morsel to be lost. Mr. A——s's name brings me to a sadder topic. I met poor Mr. Lawrence Fleming this morning; he had just heard that his nephew was killed at Germantown—where we was within an ace of regaining Philadelphia. He was killed in a desperate attempt to bring off the guns. His men rescued him—dead or dying. This is all that is known as yet—only 'tis certain he is dead. The poor old gentleman cried like a child, as he told me. 'Tis a great loss to us. Mr. Jasper Fleming was a very promising young man, of a singular cool judgment for one so young, and was much beloved and respected by all who knew him. Mr. Fleming senr. referred in very moving terms to your kindness to his poor nephew, when he was a prisoner. Mr. Branhholm is with General Arnold—was well when last heard off. This will be a sad blow to him.” Althea came into the room just as Mrs. Maverick had read thus far, and found her in tears. “Read this, child,” said the old lady, holding out the letter. “'Tis from Mr. Gosforth. Poor Mrs. Branhholm! I'm sure my heart bleeds for her! To think that this dreadful rebellion should come to this!”

At the mention of Mrs. Branhholm's name, Althea had turned very pale. She did not take the letter, but walked with unsteady steps to a chair, and sat down. A mist was before her eyes. She thought her cousin was speaking, but she could not distinguish any words—though the jingling of wagon-bells and the cracking of a whip smote painfully on her ear from the street. She was not given to fainting, but she felt as though she were sinking in a roaring sea. By this time, Mrs. Maverick had wiped her eyes and her spectacles, and turned to look at

Althea. "'Tis not Noel, child," she said hastily, observing her pallor. "At least"—she added, "nothing has been heard of him, and no news is good news. 'Tis poor Mr. Fleming that's killed. How terribly cut up his brother will be, when he hears of it!"

"If you please, Mis' Maverick, Penelope say, you please step down jes' one minute, 'bout dat tukkey," said the small black boy who acted as page to the establishment—and who, whatever the nature of the announcement he made, grinned with equal satisfaction, and opened the door with the same joyous flourish.

Now Mrs. Maverick had invited Mr. Justice Jones and Colonel Beverley Robinson to supper that night. The reinforcements for Philadelphia were to start next morning, the Delaware being now open; and as Captain Digby had lost his regiment by the Convention, Sir Henry Clinton was good-naturedly sending him to General Howe with a request that he would do something for him; and Fred had easily persuaded Mrs. Maverick and his sister to go with him. Mrs. Maverick's little supper was therefore a farewell entertainment, and the turkey had been much on her mind. "Dear, dear! I suppose if I don't go, she'll manage to spoil it!" she exclaimed, putting her spectacles on upside down, in her distraction between the public and private calls upon her attention. "Read it yourself, my dear—I'll be back again in five minutes." So saying, she put the letter into Althea's hand, and kissed her cheek. "Bless me, how cold you are, child! I don't wonder you are upset—this is sad news indeed. I'm sure I got as fond of him, poor fellow, as though he had been my own flesh and blood."

When she had gone, Althea looked at the letter, but it was some time before her trembling hands could hold it steadily enough for her to find the place—the words danced before her in sick confusion. She tried to fix her mind on her cousin's words, "'Tis poor Mr. Fleming that's killed," as giddy dancers fix their eyes on some immovable point. And all the while, the only clear thought in her mind was that Jasper had been dead a month—six weeks—and she had not known it—and the world had seemed the same!

She sat thus for a few minutes, and then went up to her room—on her way passing the window whence she had so often looked towards Long Island, because Jasper Fleming might be there. She locked her door, and fell on her knees by her bedside, by the impulse which moves most of us to that attitude,

when we are staggering under some burden too heavy for our hearts to bear. The few tears she shed were so hot that they only scorched her eyelids, and left the weight at her heart as heavy as ever.

Then, with a desperate struggle with her own anguish, she told herself that she had not loved him—that no word of love had ever passed between them—that he had been not only her country's enemy (enemies had loved before then), but a rebel—and rebel was a shameful name. "No! not shameful!" she cried aloud, half-starting from her knees. "If he was mistaken, 'twas an honest error—and now that he has atoned for it so dearly, even I may surely own that his death was heroic—and, as he thought, for his country!" As she said this, Althea found her cheeks suddenly wet with a rain of tears, which seemed to have all fallen in a moment, like the drops of mountain storms. They did not much relieve her, but she presently remembered that if she could not weep, perhaps she could pray. "But oh, my God! what shall I pray for?" she thought; "unless I ask that I may die too!" But as this bitter cry went up from her heart, she thought of Jasper's mother, of Noel, and of Mary, and prayed for them; and afterwards, as she recalled the days in Boston, she acknowledged the pride which had chiefly embittered them. And thinking these meeker thoughts, and praying these unselfish prayers, her grief grew gentler, and could be partly expressed by tears.

* * * * *

Mrs. Maverick, having seen the turkey comfortably settled on the spit, returned to the dining-parlour. As she opened the door, the draught took the letter which Althea had left on the table, and wafted it to her feet. "Poor girl!" said the old lady, taking it up, and feeling a wet spot upon the paper. "She has a warm heart, for all her high spirits. Any one can see with half an eye that she's not indifferent to Noel Branhholm—but 'tis perhaps as well now that she never admitted his addresses; though, to be sure, things may come round yet."

Althea unlocked her door at her cousin's knock, and then, turning to the glass, began to smooth her ruffled hair with hands which trembled visibly.

"After all, my dear, it might have been Noel," said the old lady, sitting down in the dimity arm-chair.

"I daresay Jasper was quite as dear to his mother," said Althea in a low voice.

"She thought the world of him—she often told me so," observed Mrs. Maverick—with a prompt adoption of the past tense, which smote Althea to the heart. "And if he had not been a rebel, I think there's no doubt but he might have been made a judge one day. 'Tis a great pity he should have thrown away his life like this. I used to fancy he had something on his mind—I wonder if it was his cousin Mary. Poor fellow, he was very patient when he was ill, and always had something witty to say. I remember one day when I told him he was patient, he said he could be ill-humoured enough for that matter, but for feeling 'twas unfair to be naughty, when he knew I was too generous to punish him."

Fred was much affected on learning the news. Jasper was, he declared, the cleverest fellow he had ever met—next to Jack André—and it was a d——d shame he should have been sacrificed. He added that no one who had never found himself in the act of cutting down his own particular friend, knew what this cursed war was ; and, for his own part, he could not understand why we did not patch it up with the rebels, and turn our arms against the French—our natural enemies, whom it was at once a duty and a pleasure to fight. As for this slaughtering one's own flesh and blood, it might suit Rodgers, and De Lancey, and the Butlers, but he should be glad to have no more of it. At the same time, Captain Digby observed that few things would give him such unalloyed pleasure, as attending the execution of Mr. Hancock, Sam Adams, and his cousin, and several other members of Congress whom he named—after which he was convinced that the rest would listen to reason, and everybody might be happy.

CHAPTER LV.

FALSE ALARMS.

THE rebel vales, the rebel dales,
With rebel trees surrounded,
The distant woods, the hills and floods,
With rebel echoes sounded.

THE BATTLE OF THE KEGS.

To all loyal persons then in Philadelphia, the winter which followed the occupation of that city by the British army was the most delightful of their lives. In return for the comfortable

quarters which they found there, the British officers exerted themselves to make things lively, with a zeal which, had it been exerted in a military direction after the battle of Long Island, would probably have crushed that rattlesnake of rebellion which had so imperfectly learned that it must "UNITE OR DIE." The zeal, however, much outran the discretion. Besides the legitimate entertainments of banquets, balls, and theatrical performances, a house was opened where there was dancing once a week, and gaming every day—with a chess-board or two in a corner for the sobersides. There was a deal of swaggering about the streets, and the taverns were crowded with officers and gentlemen who, when a little in their cups, would awaken the far-echoing streets of the Quaker City, by roaring at the tops of their voices—"God save great George our King!"

Nor was this the worst offence offered to the shade of William Penn—cocks were fought, bears and badgers were baited, and improper persons—attired in the colours of the regiment whose officers they honoured by their regard—drove openly down the line whenever there was a review.

Mr. Washington meantime, contrary to the advice of Congress, who, having good fires to write their letters by, did not see what an army wanted with huts for the winter, had insisted on going into winter quarters—which he had accordingly done at Valley Forge, a rugged valley only twenty miles north-west from the city. Here he and his men slept on the bleak hill-sides, in frost and snow, with about half a blanket each to cover them, and a pair of shoes to every three men or so; and dined on a salt herring, or a few potatoes—while Congress intrigued zealously with Gates and Conway, and tried to bribe Lafayette into abandoning Washington's party, by the offer of a command against Canada.

At last—the General's patience and rations being alike exhausted—he wrote—not to resign, as some of them had hoped to starve him into doing—but to observe that soldiers were not stocks or stones, but, like other men, required clothes and food—though they could now dispense with the soap which he had asked for six months ago, as they had now very few shirts left to wash. His Excellency further remarked, that it was highly impolitic to seize cattle by force—especially as he had only paper money to pay for them with; but that if his men were not fed somehow or other they would mutiny. At the same time, he begged to assure Congress that it was very consider-

ably easier to draw up remonstrances in a comfortable room, than to sleep without blankets on a snowy hillside.

Even Congress was a little ashamed, and began to think it had perhaps better not go too far, in trying to stir up a clamour against General Washington for the loss of Philadelphia. A little before this, Mr. Wilkinson (now a Brigadier) had blabbed some of his master's secrets to Lord Stirling's aide—and in particular had quoted a certain passage from a letter which Conway had written to Gates at Albany. On this coming to His Excellency, he wrote and told Conway what Wilkinson had said. Whereupon the whole cabal collapses like a burst bubble, and every one of the conspirators (except Conway) hastens to swear that he never said anything—never meant anything by what he did say—and is, in fact, more innocent than the babe unborn. Gates, in particular, piteously beseeches His Excellency to help him detect the wretch who has thus traduced him—and wildly asks Wilkinson who can have betrayed him? to which Wilkinson suggests that possibly Colonel Troup may have got talking with Major Hamilton, when he was in Albany in October.

Meantime, while the owners of the houses were shivering in their huts out at Valley Forge, the junketings went on briskly in Philadelphia—agreeably diversified by two or three sorties, and a good many skirmishes, outpost affairs, and foraging-parties—in most of which the Queen's Rangers had a conspicuous share—but none of which had any important result. Philadelphia resounded to martial strains, and one could not go out of a morning, without seeing the Highlanders exercising in the streets, with the music of the band spread out on the steps of the nearest house.

Early in the new year, however, there was a mighty commotion one morning. Captain Digby's servant rushed in breathless, as he sat at breakfast with Captain André in the latter's quarters, to report that an infernal machine was floating down the Delaware, and had already blown up two boys, who had gone to see what it was.

Captain Digby asked which wharf it was at, snatched his hat and sword, and was off down High Street, with Jack André after him, before the man had finished his story. Arrived on the wharf, they found an excited crowd watching some kegs, which were slowly drifting down stream. Presently Sir William Howe himself appeared on the scene, and ordered the

kegs to be fired at—on which many of the civilians hastily retired.

"What are they all afraid of?" asked André of Captain De Lancey, who just then came up from the water's edge. De Lancey replied that so far as he could see they were kegs, with nothing extraordinary about them; but that some people declared they had seen bayonet-points through the holes, and others that the kegs were full of rebels. At this André laughed heartily, and vowed that the good folks of Philadelphia had been reading of the wooden horse of Troy, and had got their heads turned.

The rebels made themselves very merry over this alarm, with which their spies soon made them acquainted. They called the affair the "Battle of the Kegs," and celebrated it in verses, which they sang around their watchfires to keep themselves warm. They were by this time a little better off—Light Horse Harry of Virginia having captured several droves of cattle, in the marsh-meadows on the Delaware.

It was very unpleasant in Philadelphia for suspected persons; and any one found in the streets without a lantern, between the beating of the tattoo at half-past eight, and the reveille, was examined by the patrols, and locked up, unless he could give a satisfactory account of himself.

Captain Digby fell a victim to this order one snowy night. He had been invited to a card-and-supper-party at Mr. Edward Shippen's, and Jack André, who was also there, had begun to talk of Canada; upon which Miss Digby had good-naturedly told the company of the journal which the Captain had kept while he was a prisoner, and illustrated with his own hand. He had lent this journal to Miss Digby, and she begged her brother to step round and fetch it. So Fred started off, and while he was gone, the company sat down to a game of basset.

Mr. Shippen's family was one of the most respectable in Philadelphia, and he himself was a lawyer of high standing. He had three daughters, of whom Miss Peggy, the youngest, was considered one of the belles of the city. She was only just seventeen, and charmingly vivacious. She had taken a great fancy to Althea—who professed to feel a motherly affection in return, on the strength of being some seven or eight years Peggy's senior.

This way of talking, and a certain listlessness in Althea's

manner of late, had brought upon her several lectures from her cousin.

"It is very foolish for a young woman to exaggerate her age," said Mrs. Maverick, on one of these occasions. "People will think you old quite soon enough, without your putting the idea into their heads for them. And let me tell you, Althea, there's nothing so calculated to make a woman lose her youth early, as her imagining she is losing it. Women could keep young a vast deal longer than they do, if they would resolve not to let themselves fancy they are old. I am turned sixty-five, but I protest I don't feel like an old woman yet, and as for you—'tis preposterous! But I know what it all means!"

So saying, Mrs. Maverick glanced at Althea over her spectacles, and shook her head meaningly.

"You have lost your looks a little lately," she continued, as Althea did not speak; "and your spirits have been very uneven; but when you are animated, there are very few young women you need fear as rivals—I don't say it to flatter you. I'm sure, the other day, when you was telling Miss Peggy Shippen about our being insulted by the rebels at Jamaica, no one, to look at you, would have took you for more than two years older than she—and Peggy looks very young, even for her age."

"She is a charming creature," said Althea. "'Twould be a shame that sorrow should ever approach her."

"Tut, tut! always talking of sorrow!" exclaimed Mrs. Maverick peevishly. "I protest you'll soon look like your own grandmother, if you give way to this melancholy! When you first came from England, you was as amusing a companion as I would wish to have, but now—but 'tis easy enough to see what it means! You need not leave the room—I'm not going to talk about Mr. Branzholm—though I *do* think you had much better get him out of your head. Captain André, as any one can see, is——"

But at this point in Mrs. Maverick's lecture, her audience slipped away, and left her to shake her head at the tall chest of drawers in the recess opposite, and which was so highly polished that (the day being bright) it reflected the gleam of her spectacles.

This evening, however, at Mr. Shippen's, no one could complain that Althea was not animated. She and Peggy, ably assisted by Captain André, kept the company so much alive, that no one noticed how long Captain Digby had been in stepping round to Walnut Street, until the servants brought in the supper-trays.

"Why, bless me!" cries Captain André—pulling out his watch and jumping up from the basset-table all in the same moment—"Digby has been gone above an hour! If I may be permitted, I'll just run round and see what he's about."

At this moment, however, the stalwart form of Captain Digby appeared, filling up the doorway. He had the journal under his arm.

"I was stopped for having no lantern," he explained; "and as I had forgot the word for to-night, nothing would do but I must be marched off to the guard-house—and there I waited while they sent to the Captain of the guard, who, being just sat down to the faro-table, did not come for a full half-hour."

The journal, with its coloured drawings of Canadian birds, beasts, insects, trees and plants, sketches of Indians, and illustrations of all sorts, kept the company so late that it was midnight before the ladies put on their cloaks and clogs, to go home through the snowy streets, Captain André escorting Miss Peggy Chew—a very pretty and lively girl in her way, though Althea thought her not to be compared to Peggy Shippen.

CHAPTER LVI.

CAPTAIN ANDRÉ PERMITS HIMSELF TO REFLECT UPON HIS SOVEREIGN.

O halcyon days, for ever dear,
When all were happy, all were gay,
When winter did like spring appear,
And January fair as May!

Then laughing Sol went gaily down,
Still brighter in the morn to rise,
And fondly waking o'er the town,
On Britain's Ensign beamed his eyes.

Then all confest the valiant knight
Had learnt in camps the art to please,
Respectful, witty, yet polite,
Uniting fancy, grace, and ease.

VERSES WRITTEN THE WINTER THE BRITISH ARMY
WAS IN PHILADELPHIA.

ALMOST as soon as she reached Philadelphia, Althea had written a letter to Mrs. Branzholm, expressive of her sympathy in the loss she had sustained. It was a great effort to write it; it

cost Althea several sleepless nights, half a quire of letter-paper, and some very bitter tears, and was very short when it was done. She sent it under cover to Mr. Gosforth—but neither letter nor enclosure ever reached its destination.

Whatever our griefs may be, it is impossible that they can weigh on us as heavily, when our attention is being constantly demanded for what is going on around us, as when we have nothing to do but to dwell on them. In the gaieties of that winter, and especially in the society of Captain André, Althea sometimes forgot for a while what it was that made her heart so heavy—but the pain would always come back again, and then she remembered, with a new pang, that Jasper Fleming was dead.

But she was not of a temperament to sink readily into a settled melancholy. Life was strong within her, and she struggled hard. She told herself that it was folly to let her whole life be embittered about what might have been. Perhaps it would be better to listen to Jack André—who certainly needed only the very smallest encouragement to become her suitor. If he had had his romance, as everybody knew, she had once had a vain dream—which but one living soul had ever suspected. They would meet on equal terms, neither wronging the other.

Althea was quite sure that no one had ever guessed her secret—except Mary Fleming. Mary, she believed, had divined it—made wise, perhaps, by a secret of her own. Then there rose up before Althea's eyes a vision of that summer in Virginia—not yet four years ago, but they were all young and joyous then—and now the very world itself seemed to have grown old and gray.

"Mary will marry Noel, and every one will be happy but me!" thought Althea, with a selfish forgetfulness of anybody else's possible sorrows, only extenuated by the exceeding bitterness of a sorrow which cannot be told.

Captain Digby's sanguine anticipations had not been realised. Far from there being any prospect of a reconciliation, party feeling ran higher than ever. Although, ever since his triumph at Saratoga, Gates had been busily engaged in his old intrigues, he had behaved in that crowning event of his life with a delicacy and moderation worthy of an honourable man. Nor was he involved in the complications which followed. No sooner had the captive army reached Cambridge, than everything went

wrong, and each side accused the other of wanton insolence—until feeling ran so high that a riot took place which might easily have led to a massacre.

General Gates had been severely blamed for not making harder terms at Saratoga,—for which, however, Clinton's advance up the Hudson was to be thanked,—and Congress was undoubtedly willing to snatch at any pretext for detaining the Convention troops in America until the end of the war. And pretexts were not wanting. Sir William Howe's proposal to embark the troops at Rhode Island was one of the most unlucky of the many unlucky strokes of British diplomacy, whereby England lost her North American Colonies. Rhode Island was too near New York, and Congress professed to see in this proposal—and in the unseaworthiness of the transports which Sir William assembled there—an intention to repudiate the Convention. It was therefore resolved to detain the troops until a ratification of the treaty could arrive from England—and while waiting for this, there was time to consider that, even should England ratify the Convention, Burgoyne's army sent back to Europe would enable the British Government to send out to America an equal number of troops at present employed on European stations.

The "Old Congress"—allowing the army which was shedding its blood in the field to want the necessities of life, while it was for ever meddling with military arrangements—appointing Boards of War to control its Generals—and, above all, engrossed in a secret cabal to supersede Washington (not by Gates, as those least deep in the secret imagined, but by Lee, now about to be exchanged) was not a Body pre-eminently deserving to be styled "Honourable." It took care to leave no record of its proceedings, and those who could have told its history came to the conclusion that the less said about it the better, and put their notes into the fire. Such as it was, however, the Old Congress represented the Provinces; and in refusing to acknowledge it or its Generals, the British Ministry had given it the fairest possible excuse for doubting whether faith would be kept with it—but, to be sure, when the King's Commissioners called the rebel Commander-in-Chief, "George Washington, Esquire," they did not dream that a British army would ever surrender to the rebels!

Poor General Elbow-room returned to England on his parole, hoping to accommodate matters. But His Majesty shut

the doors of the presence-chamber against him—and even the satisfaction of a court-martial was refused him, on the ground that he was a prisoner on parole.

Meanwhile, a mighty Ally had appeared for the revolted Colonies. It was perhaps too much to expect that France should lose so excellent an opportunity, of at once embarrassing her hereditary foe, and regaining a footing in America. Turgot learned Burgoyne's catastrophe with joy unfeigned, and before the year was ended, Louis XVI.—careless of the precedent he was setting to servants that break away from their masters—had made up his mind to acknowledge the Colonies, and enter into a commercial Treaty with them.

Just a month before France finally threw off the mask, and announced these intentions, Lord North brought in another batch of Conciliatory Bills.

No words can describe the wrath of the British armies in New York and Philadelphia when, about the middle of April, the rough drafts of these Bills reached Governor Tryon, and were circulated all over the Provinces. There was not a man in either army who did not feel himself personally aggrieved, when he heard that Congress was to be treated with as if it were a lawful authority, the several States to be recognised as independent until negotiations were completed—and even a "reasonable and moderate contribution towards the common defence of the Empire when re-united," not to be insisted on as a *sine quâ non*! Even this point was to be waived—with the feeble proviso, that in that case the Colonies must not expect support in their turn! In fact, everybody was to be acknowledged, from Congress and General Washington, down to the humblest rebel jack-in-office, and everything was to be conceded.

"Good God, Digby!" exclaimed Captain André, the first time he saw him, after hearing this astounding piece of conciliation. "Ministers are making fools of us!" and then he went on to say some very hard things of Lord George. He even criticised his Sovereign's actions—observing that when His Majesty's royal Grandfather had taken the trouble to scratch Lord George's name off the list of Privy Councillors with his own hand, for his poltroonery at Minden, 'twas an act of little less than impiety to reinstate him. "But," he added, "the true reason for all on a sudden swallowing so huge a slice of humble-pie aint far to seek—'tis the French alliance has brought Lord North to these peaceable dispositions!"

"My sister has it in a letter from Bath, that came with the General's own posts, that some of the Country Party spoke out pretty plain in Parliament about it," says Digby. "And all the refugees I've spoke with are furious to hear that every one is to be pardoned, and next to no confiscations to be made. It seems to me we'd better never have gone so far with 'em at first, than not go on now to a proper conclusion. His Majesty, it seems to me, is neither more nor less than bidding us put our tails between our legs, and go lick the hands of Congress!"

"'Tis good-bye to our chances of distinction, I fear," returns André. "When we go home, all the women will laugh at us—beat by a parcel of hedgers and ditchers at Saratoga, and now out-generalled by a squad of attorneys and farmers in Congress! Our honour is concerned in bringing 'em to their knees. God knows I'm not bloodthirsty, but if we don't put down this rebellion we are eternally disgraced! This acknowledging of everybody, and treating rebels just as if they was ordinary belligerents, is sheer folly! And not content with acknowledging the rebel Congress, and the rebel Generals, the rebel currency, forsooth, is to be acknowledged too! 'Tis a premium on rebellion, and a flat insult to honest loyal subjects!"

"We took reams upon reams of their pasteboard at Ticonderoga," says Digby. "Some of the old officers saved some of it, I believe, but most of us made away with what we had. I remember there was three Captains papered a room in the General's quarters at Saratoga with it. That was a devil of a shame, Jack! we was sold—fairly sold—and I wish to Heaven Sir Harry had blown out Lord George's cowardly brains for him, instead of letting himself be bought off with the Bath!"

"Give a poor dog a bone," said André. "Sir Harry, though, is a dog whose bite is worse than his bark, and I don't fancy even the Bath would have appeased him if he had not felt pretty sure that my Lord George Germaine would, if he persisted, find some other means of preserving the skin he values so highly—that pretended affair of his with Governor Johnstone was dished up somehow, I'm convinced. He didn't sheer off at Minden, depend on't, to stand up to be shot at in a duello."

"I wish to Heaven they'd shot him for his conduct at Minden!" cries Fred. "He has lost us America, with his shameful negligence and folly. His Majesty, they say, has refused to admit poor General Burgoyne to an audience. Why

don't he send Lord George, the real author of our calamity, to the Tower? Never shall I forget the poor General's look, when I took my leave of him at Saratoga! If ever a man was ill used in this world, 'tis Sir John Burgoyne!"

"Ah, Digby, how I envy you that mission!" says André, his eyes kindling with generous admiration. "To pass undetected through the very strongholds of the rebels, and to persuade 'em you was their friend,—what is courage in action, to the coolness necessary for such an adventure as that! I am an unlucky dog! I thought to have wrote my name in the annals of these campaigns—though, upon my honour, now I see to what an ignominious conclusion Lord North means to bring us, I'm almost glad to be unknown to fame."

"We shall have the French to fight now, if the war does go on, Jack—there'll be some satisfaction there," observed Captain Digby, surveying his finger-nails, as though he intended to attack his natural enemies with those unsophisticated weapons.

CHAPTER LVII.

THE MISCHIANZA.

There's a Masque :
Have you heard what's the invention ?

THE DUKE OF MILAN.

JACK ANDRÉ's lament at having had no opportunity of immortalising himself was premature. He had indeed already gained universal admiration by his good-natured exertions throughout the winter. He had painted a curtain for the theatre, acted in most of the plays, and been, with his friend Captain Montresor, the life and soul of all the performances. But he was now to exhibit his talents on a wider scale, in arranging the Entertainment to be given to Sir William Howe on his departure for England.

For, to the very great regret of the army, Sir William had requested to be recalled. He had endeared himself to the army in an extraordinary degree, and there was a universal outburst of grief when it was known that he was to be superseded. The time was short; Sir Henry Clinton had already arrived to take the command, and those who were best informed believed that he had received orders from home to evacuate Philadelphia.

The snows had long since melted, and the slushy half-paved streets were now white and clean. Such trees as had not been cut down for fuel now made a welcome shade, and the Treaty Tree at Kensington was green. A pair of hanging-birds had built their nest, far out on the end of a bough of the great tree which stood on the right of Mr. Shippen's door; and in the shady garden behind the house the fire-birds darted in and out of the bushes like flames, and humming-birds—more like great winged sapphires and emeralds than living creatures—flashed about the clove-pinks and roses. Althea, going round one afternoon to see Peggy, met her crossing the lawn with her tame fawn following her, and thought she had never seen so sweet a picture.

"Oh, you lovely pair of creatures!" cried she. "Why cannot you both go to the *Mischianza* just as you are? You are like the lady in the book I told you of, that rode upon a lion through the wild forest."

Peggy laughed and kissed her friend (while the fawn nibbled at her gown), and said this was the prettiest thing she ever had said to her.

The blackbirds in the tall yellow pines were singing like a chime of innumerable silver bells. The air seemed full of gladness—Althea's heart leapt up in spite of itself. Peggy began at once to talk about the *Mischianza*—which was the name to be given to the General's farewell Entertainment. A part of it was to be somewhat in the style of an ancient tournament, and Captain André had made drawings for the costumes of the knights and ladies, and of the trappings of the horses—and indeed for every detail. Peggy showed her friend a little sketch he had made of herself, in the semi-Turkish habit which the ladies were to wear.

"And I suppose," says Althea, holding the sketch in the shade of Peggy's quitasol—it was a very gay one, made of oiled India muslin, with an Oriental pattern of blue and orange—"I suppose, Peggy, that Captain André is to break his lance in honour of the original? who, by the bye, is twenty times more charming in her chintz gown, than in this heathenish silk and gauze."

"Indeed, no," replies Peggy simply. "I think 'tis you, Althea, whose knight he hopes to be."

"I think, my Peggy," returns Althea, giving her back the sketch, "that Jack André is a young gentleman of exquisite taste; and as Miss Peggy Shippen is the fairest and youngest of the ladies that have been spoken of for the *Mischianza*——"

"Dear Althea, you flatter me too much," says Peggy; "but 'tis your affection makes you overrate me. As for good looks"—here Peggy blushed most sweetly—"you would become the dress far better than I should; I aint stately enough to carry it off. You are right in saying it don't become me, and I like myself a deal better in this old gown. But, oh, Althea, we shall be as dull as ditchwater when you're all gone—I dread to think of it! And I should think you'd be sorry too; Captain André says New York aint half as agreeable. Aint you sorry to go?"

"No, dear Peggy," said Althea; Peggy fancied she sighed. "Don't think me unkind—I think the air don't suit me perhaps. Ever since I came, I've felt an oppression—a weight I can't throw off——"

"Why, Althea, every one says as our air is the finest possible! And the town's so cheerful—such wide streets; and the country round—real beautiful!"

"I know it," returned Althea. "Everybody says so—and I see it myself. And yet to me, 'tis the most melancholy place I ever was in; the very air seems full of heaviness."

Althea hastily dashed some tears out of her eyes as she continued,—“How foolish I must seem to you, dear Peggy! I think I'm not well. I've nothing in the world to cry about, and yet since we've been here, I'm for ever wanting to burst out a-crying.”

"Dearest Althea, I believe I can guess the cause——" began Peggy; but at that moment, she saw one of her sisters coming towards them, and Althea, pressing her arm, said hurriedly,—

"There's no cause, Peggy, none—only an odd fancy I've gotten hold of, that the air is heavy, like air in a graveyard—I've felt so sometimes in Bath. I shall throw it off, when we go away."

* * * *

Peggy was so far correct, that the next day Captain André appeared in Market Street with a great portfolio under his arm, which proved to be full of all sorts of drawings for costumes, trappings, triumphal arches, and other details.

"I've been at it night and day," he said, as he spread these before Mrs. Maverick and Miss Digby; "and we have been obliged in great measure to select designs which can be quickly carried out, the time being so short."

The Captain took advantage of Mrs. Maverick going to the window, to examine one of the drawings more minutely, to say in a kind of aside,—

"Miss Digby, I trust you will not refuse me the honour of accepting me as your Knight—I had made my request before, but 'twas only last night we finally resolved on the form the entertainment should take."

Althea did not reply for several minutes. She changed colour a little, and was visibly embarrassed.

"Then henceforth I am your sworn servant, more honoured by your condescension than I can express," says André, bowing low, and unable to conceal his delight. But Althea stopped him.

"Stay, stay," she said; "you are too quick, Captain André! I am much honoured by your compliment, but—but—I think I prefer to be a private spectator."

André's countenance fell at this.

"Am I to think, Miss Digby," he asked reproachfully, "that 'tis so distasteful to you to be represented by me, that to escape it, you prefer to take no part at all in the *Mischianza*?"

"No, no; I assure you, no," she said earnestly. "If I appeared at all, there is no one I should prefer——"

"Can you truly say that?" he asked, looking at her. Althea changed colour, but she replied calmly,—

"Most truly I can say there is no one"—Althea made an almost imperceptible pause—"in the world, that I would have chosen for my Knight in preference to you, if I was to take a part at all."

"I wish I dare believe you," he said, after watching her for a moment—and noticing that the hand with which she held his sketch of the triumphal arch trembled a little.

"You are monstrous polite, Captain André," she said, her colour rising. "It can scarce be pique at my refusal, since I fancy you had another lady in your eye before you thought of me. That was an admirable sketch you made of Peggy; but you have not done her justice—she is even lovelier than you have made her."

"By heavens!" cried André, so loud, that Mrs. Maverick—who was still examining the drawings in the retirement of the bay-window—turned round, thinking she heard herself called. "You cannot think—you surely do not—I swear I never thought of any lady but yourself! As soon as ever the idea of a tournament was proposed, 'twas you I thought of——"

"You honour me vastly—nay, do not be angry," Althea had begun in a sarcastic tone, which had brought the blood to André's face. "I assure you I'm not jealous of Peggy—I love her too dearly. I have another reason—a foolish one, perhaps, but—in short, I should be uneasy at my dignity as a Lady of the Mischianza, but shall heartily enjoy the humbler part of spectator."

"That's said to put me off—'tis patent! Who will believe that Miss Digby shrinks like a milkmaid from appearing amongst the quality!" cries André.

"I hope," observes Althea, straightening her neck, "that one may prefer a less striking position, without ceasing to be a gentlewoman."

"You mean you're obdurate! I vow adamant's not harder than you can be!" he burst out—but at this opportune moment, Mrs. Maverick brought back the plans for the pavilions, and the sketches of the water-procession, which she declared she had thoroughly mastered, and admired prodigiously.

Captain Digby (who had declined the office of Herald, as involving too much speechifying) was greatly disappointed at his sister's refusal. He was a modest enough fellow himself, but was very proud of Althea, and liked to see her admired; but she was not to be persuaded.

Jack André, with whom he talked the matter over, told him about the sketch of Peggy, and added that he feared Miss Digby might possibly have felt a little jealousy—"I ought rather to say, I hope it," he added. "What I do truly fear is, that she hath refused, lest that confounded Virginian, that your aunt is for ever harping on, should hear of it."

"On that matter, my dear fellow, I know as little as yourself," returned Fred. "'Twas plain he admired her, and he's the kind of fellow all the women admire. I've a sincere regard for him myself. Then he saved my scalp, as I've often told you—in return for which I doubt I gave him a broken pate at Still-water. But his being a rebel's enough to damn him, I fancy, in her eyes. Ally always was as proud as Lucifer, and I think, even if she had been inclined to him, her pride would have overcome her inclinations——"

"Then she's jealous of Peggy Shippen, and there's hope for me!" cries Jack, wringing his hand. "My dear fellow, you've removed a mountain-load of anxiety off my mind!"

With this idea in his head, Captain André laid his lance

and shield at the feet—not of Peggy Shippen, but of Miss Chew, with whom he was on terms of easy *badinage*, without there being the least idea on either side of anything serious. Miss Chew laughingly accepted him; and Althea, when she heard of it, did not know whether to be vexed or pleased. As for Peggy Shippen, Lieutenant Winyard had taken an early opportunity of becoming her Knight.

Monday, the 18th of May, was the grand day, as was engraved on the tickets of admission.

The managers were not a little proud of the design for these tickets. Within a wreath-crowned shield, was a setting sun, with a view of the sea—soon to be ploughed by the General's homeward-bound keel. On a ribbon above the wreath were the words—

LUCEO DISCENDENS, AUCTO SPLENDORE RESURGAM.

And at the top, above the Prince of Wales's feathers,

VIVE, VALE!

Cannon and military trophies appropriately filled the spaces below.

The proceedings began with a regatta. First, came three flat-boats, with the music; then the three galleys, the *Ferret*, the *Hussar*, and the *Cornwallis*, all decked out in streamers, each bearing its own flag, and having on board the Generals, general-officers, and bebies of ladies. Each galley was attended by ten flat-boats—five on each quarter—lined with green cloth, and laden with guests. Along the river, both ships and wharves were gay with flags, and every foot of standing-room ashore and afloat was crowded with spectators.

It was half-past four in the afternoon, as this many-coloured procession moved off from Knight's Wharf, and rowed slowly down stream, while the bands struck up their loyalest tunes, and the *Vigilant* manned ship as the Admiral passed by. Just off the Market Wharf, they all lay on their oars, while the bands played GOD SAVE THE KING—the last time those strains should float above the waters of the Delaware.

But there were so many British voices there to cry “huzza”! that even if the Philadelphians were silent, no one noticed it—or—when the flood-tide came up so strong that the company were obliged to go ashore in barges—thought of the other tide setting stronger every hour.

CHAPTER LVIII.

A FLASH OF LIGHT.

THE Mischianza was to be given at Mr. Wharton's country-seat, in Southwark. The house stood in its own grounds, amidst the venerable trees of a walnut-grove, old enough and to spare to have sheltered King Tamany. Here the company disembarked (to a salute from the *Vigilant* and the *Roebuck*), and walked in procession to the lists, which had been prepared upon the lawn. The two triumphal arches, whose designs Mrs. Maverick had so much admired, made a vista which was closed by the mansion itself.

Between four files of grenadiers, and two lines of light-horse, the company crossed the lists, the bands playing all the while. At the wings of the first arch, two pavilions had been erected, and here the ladies took their seats—the fourteen Ladies of the Mischianza sitting seven on a side in the front row of each pavilion. A vast throng of soldiers, sailors, and citizens of all degrees, not included in the special invitations, poured in behind the company, and spread itself round the lists, which were lined with troops. The thousands of scarlet coats, the accoutrements gleaming in the afternoon sun, the gay streamers, and the lively strains of the music, all made up a brilliant scene, which the dark verdure of the ancient walnut-grove threw into yet more brilliant relief. The managers, known by their favours of blue and white, were hurrying about the lists, and all was expectation.

Althea sat with Mrs. Maverick in the second row—and just behind Peggy Chew. Althea was looking very handsome, in a superb silver and black brocade, over a gray satin petticoat. The only colour about her was the red on her cheeks and lips, and the coral on her neck and arms. A kerchief of India muslin, worked by her own hands, was loosely knotted across her bosom, and the lace ruffles at her elbows were of a depth and exquisite fineness which made them the envy of all female beholders. Her beautiful arms and hands were concealed as little as possible by a pair of cobweb mittens, and she wore her hair unpowdered, under a broad tuscan hat.

"When unadorned, adorned the most," whispers Peggy Chew, twisting herself round to look at Althea. "If I had

such a piece of brocade and such ruffles as those, I should think twice before I would disguise myself in this fly-away rubbish! I daresay, though, we produce a fine barbaric effect at a distance—and Peggy Shippen looks sweetly in her turban."

Peggy Shippen, being in the other pavilion, could not be very well seen, but she leaned forward at this instant, and kissed her hand to her friends in the rival camp.

And now a flourish of trumpets was heard, and, preceded by four trumpeters, a Herald galloped into the lists. Close behind, followed a band of Knights—each with his esquire bearing his lance and shield—led by Lord Cathcart, mounted on a prancing charger, his stirrups held by negro pages, and his lance and shield borne by his two esquires.

The Knights (among whom Captain André was conspicuous by his gallant bearing) were arrayed in ancient habits of white and red silk, and rode gray horses richly caparisoned in the same colours. Their Herald's surcoat bore the device of two roses intertwined, with the motto—"WE DROOP WHEN SEPARATED."

As this gay cavalcade rode round the lists, a tumult of applause broke out, calculated to test the discipline of the horses. These chivalrous beasts tossed their heads and stepped higher as the cheers rang louder, and seemed entirely to enter into the spirit of the occasion—Captain André's charger caracolled in a style worthy of the *Romaunt of the Rose*.

As the Knights passed the pavilions, they saluted the ladies, who were now able to make out the device and motto which each Knight bore upon his shield. Lord Cathcart—who appeared in honour of Miss Auchmuty—had taken for his device, Cupid riding on a lion, and with the legend—"SURMOUNTED BY LOVE." Captain André—whose grace in saluting was particularly admired—had for his device, two gamecocks fighting, and for his motto—"NO RIVAL." He had made a mighty mystery to Althea of this motto, but had darkly hinted that, when she saw it, she would perhaps see more in it than met the common eye. When, therefore, the Knights of the Blended Rose halted to pay their devoirs to their chosen ladies, and Captain André—as if by an accidental movement—extended his right arm towards the shield in his esquire's hand, Althea felt her cheeks tingle.

The Knights took up their stand near their ladies' pavilion, while their Herald made proclamation to sound of trumpet, to

the effect, that the Knights of the Blended Rose asserted the Ladies of the Blended Rose to excel those of the whole world in wit, beauty, and every accomplishment, and were ready to maintain the same against all comers.

Scarcely had the Herald proclaimed this defiance for the third time, when he was answered by a blast at the farther end of the lists, and a second Herald, attended like the first with four trumpeters—but dressed in black and orange, and bearing on his surcoat a burning mountain, with the motto, “I BURN FOR EVER”—came spurring in, and after a brief parley with his brother Herald, accepted the defiance on behalf of the Knights of the Burning Mountain—who asserted that *their* ladies were excelled by none in the universe.

The seven Knights of the Burning Mountain—who were all in black and orange, and rode black horses—hereupon paid their devoirs to the ladies, and drew up in front of the White Knights, whose Chief now cast down his gauntlet, which the Chief of the Black Knights (Captain Watson of the Guards) ordered his esquire to take up. All the Knights then received their lances and shields from their esquires, and with a graceful movement wheeled to a sufficient distance. Then, fixing lance in rest, and the Heralds crying “*Laissez aller !*” the two lines galloped to the encounter, and, meeting in mid career, shivered their lances, to the huge delight of the spectators.

It is unfortunate, that the only detailed accounts of this famous Passage of Arms which have come down to us, are those written by Captain André himself—who, with the modesty which distinguished him, has merged his own particular deeds in the general glory. He tells us, indeed, that after that encounter with lances, the combatants discharged their pistols—thus incidentally revealing to us that the period represented must have been the late decline of the Age of Chivalry. What kind of pistols they were, which the Knights of the Blended Rose and of the Burning Mountain respectively discharged at each other—whether the solid but cumbersome demihaque, the light and handy dragon, or the gimcrack firelock (on the pattern of that one wherewith Cornet Joyce pointed his immortal peroration)—he does not inform us. We may be sure, however, that, whatever the pattern of their weapons, they popped them off in knightly fashion, and that Jack André fought close behind his leader.

One could wish that he had given us more particular details

Y

of the fourth encounter—in which the Knights fought with that unequivocally chivalric weapon, the sword. It must have been a pretty sight, to see those fourteen toledos leap from their scabbards, and twinkle in the sun. Captain André's swordsmanship, in particular, we are sure must have been worth seeing. It would not be difficult to imagine him—spurring his horse to the rescue of his Chief, hard bested by Watson and the Knights of the Mountain—or swiftly recovering himself, and carrying the war to the other end of the field. But he has told us nothing of all this, and we must be content with imagining. The esquires too, no doubt, bore them bravely—Captain André's young brother Louis (who was a lieutenant in the 26th Foot) not the least.

Captain André does, however, mention a furious encounter between the two Chiefs, who, towards the close of the tourney, singled each other out, and slashed away in good fourteenth-century style, until the Marshal of the Field, rushing in between them, declared that enough had been done for honour, and that their mistresses commanded them, as the price of their future favours, to instantly put up their swords.

After this, there was a grand procession, under the triumphal arches, to the garden in front of the house. The first arch, being erected in honour of Lord Howe, was adorned with naval trophies, and had a sailor with a drawn cutlass standing in each of its niches.

As the ladies left their seats, Peggy Shippen darted across to Althea.

"Oh, wasn't it lovely?" cries Peggy, squeezing Althea's arm in her delight. "Was ever anything so *grand*! Oh, I do dote upon seeing fighting, when I know there's nobody going to be hurt!"

The Knights meantime were drawn up beyond the Admiral's arch; and as soon as the ladies moved on, their cavaliers dismounted and joined them, and so they all proceeded towards the house. A flight of carpeted steps led up to the door, and into a spacious hall, whose panels had been painted to imitate Siena marble. Here, and in the adjoining apartments, the company found tea, lemonade, and other cooling drinks; and while they were refreshing themselves with these, the Knights came in, and, on bended knee, received the favours prepared for them, and which till now had adorned their ladies' turbans. As Captain André received his from Peggy Chew, an aide of Sir

Henry Clinton's came up, and, as soon as André had risen from his knee, touched him on the arm, and whispered something in his ear.

"Take him to my lodgings," says André—"his business must wait till to-morrow. 'Tis only a messenger come from the rebels, about the Convention troops, and I will not lose the opening of the ball for any rebel unhung!"

These last words were said to Peggy Chew—who laughed and said she had heard of a death's-head at a feast, but had never known of one before.

The dusk of twilight had set in before the dancing began. The ballroom was upstairs, and was painted in pale blue, panelled with a small gold beading, and in the panels were festoons of flowers in their natural colours, and a pink "sur-base," with blue drapery. Nearly every pier-glass in Philadelphia had been borrowed for the adornment of this room and the supper-room. The ballroom was a blaze of mirrors and wax-lights, all decorated with ribbons and artificial flowers.

Amidst all this splendour, Althea felt as though she were walking in a dream. Even the gay assemblies which she had seen in Bath had never equalled this, but she felt a weariness such as she had never known there—though, during her brief season at Bath, she had believed she had enough to damp her spirits. She seemed to herself to be dull and faded, with all the life gone out of her. But when Captain Montresor came to claim her hand for the quadrille, she took her place with a grace as stately, and answered him with wit as sparkling, as though her heart had been as light as her feet.

Captain Montresor, who was chief engineer, had planned the fireworks; and a little before ten o'clock he disappeared from the ballroom (from which Captain André had also been absent for some time). As soon as it was announced that the fireworks were about to begin, a great part of the company flocked downstairs, some to the garden, and others to the windows of the great hall—many of the ladies, however, among whom was Althea, remaining at the windows of the ballroom.

The fireworks were shown from the nearest of the arches, and began with a magnificent bouquet of rockets, which rushed heavenwards in all directions and fell in showers of golden rain. Roman candles, Catherine wheels, serpents, shot up, whizzed, and sputtered, amidst the applause of the crowd. Set-pieces

followed, to the number of twenty, all which went off without any hitch or mishap.

But Captain Montresor had reserved his grandest display to the last. The great triumphal arch suddenly translated itself into light—rockets flew hissing upwards, and burst in fiery spray, and fire-balloons slowly ascended. The bomb-shell and the flaming heart, which adorned the pillars of Jack André's masterpiece, spouted Chinese fountains, and above the architrave on the top appeared Fame, dressed all in stars, with her trumpet set to her lips, and a label coming out of it, bearing the device—"TES LAURIERS SONT IMMORTELS." Coloured fires sprang from every crevice on the arch, and amidst all this blaze, one last torrent of rockets burst from the pediment, out-blazing even Fame, who was seen for one moment—a light through light—and then was lost in the fiercer glare of more common fires (as ambition is sometimes swept away by the more common forces which itself has called into action), and then all was darkness.

In that last most dazzling moment, Althea happened to glance from the spectacle to the spectators, and saw Jasper Fleming, standing in the garden below, among a little knot of gentlemen. She could distinctly see every line of his face and figure, even to the hilt of his sword, which gleamed from the folds of the cloak thrown carelessly over his left shoulder. Every detail of his person and uniform impressed itself on her memory—the dark-blue coat, with skirts fastened back, showing the scarlet lining, the white stock, the ruffles at his breast and wrist, the white waistcoat and breeches, the long riding-boots, and the red-plumed cocked hat, and gilt epaulette.

She thought he perceived her—his eyes seemed to be looking straight into hers. He was, or the coloured light perhaps made him appear, deathly pale, and his face was sterner than she had ever seen it.

All this, which takes so long to tell, passed in an instant—in the last discharge of fireworks. Then darkness swallowed up the triumphal arch, Fame and her motto, the delighted crowd, and Jasper's frowning face—and sound took the place of light, as a great cheer broke forth from the multitude, and was echoed in less well-bred tones from far beyond the garden-enclosure. But Althea did not hear it—she had fainted away as she stood, squeezed up against the window-shutter.

* * * *

She came to herself in a few minutes. By that time, the

crowd had already begun to break up, and the servants were relighting the wax candles, most of which had been put out while the fireworks were displayed. Althea found herself being forcibly deposited in a chair by Mrs. Maverick, who had instantly observed her indisposition.

"You will feel better now, my dear," said that energetic old lady, thrusting her bottle of smelling-salts under Althea's nose. "'Tis the monstrous heat—I felt just ready to go off myself, before they opened the other windows. I protest, I thought I must be stifled!"

"Did you see it, cousin?" gasped Althea, clutching Mrs. Maverick's wrist, and looking wildly at her. "It stood just there—on the garden-path——"

She was still all confused and bewildered, and was trembling from head to foot.

"See it? The figure of Fame? of course I did, child! Do you think I'm blind? But 'twas up on top of the arch——"

"I feel so stupid, dear cousin, I don't quite know what I'm saying," said Althea—a faint tinge of colour creeping over her white cheeks. She stretched herself, and rubbed her eyes as though she had but just awakened from a dream. "I'll sit here a little, till I recover myself."

"You must try to get better soon, my dear, for supper will be ready directly," observed Mrs. Maverick, who really seemed to have borne the heat and excitement better than Althea—but then she did not think she had just seen the ghost of a man she was always trying vainly to forget, reproaching her with its hollow eyes.

Of course, the idea soon occurred to Althea, as a sensible young woman, that Jasper Fleming might possibly not be dead after all, but might be actually here in the flesh, alive and well. But there was quite as much agitation in this alternative as in the other—so much, indeed, that her knees gave way anew under her, and she could only feebly beg to be allowed to sit still a little longer. It seemed to her that if the suspense continued many minutes, she must die; she was far too shaken and confused for hope—she only felt that she must know the worst, or die, without further delay. She had almost brought herself to tell her cousin what she had seen—Mrs. Maverick had been bathing her forehead with some essence of lavender, which she always carried about with her, and had just left her

an instant to fetch another chair—when she heard steps passing below, and Captain André's voice saying,—

“So Colonel Fleming has come in about it. You may have seen him—he was here just now—a tall man, in a dark-blue uniform. He——”

Althea lost the rest, as the speaker had by this time got out of earshot; but this was enough. Jasper was alive—was there—and she might see him at any moment! She found this thought more reviving than the lavender water, and almost as inspiring as the smelling-salts—I say, almost—for Mrs. Maverick's smelling-salts were of a most uncommon vigour.

The truth must be told—no sooner was Althea satisfied that what she had just seen was no phantom risen out of its bloody grave to upbraid her, but only a rebel officer come to flaunt his rebel uniform under the British General's eyes—and doubtless full of secret triumph at the expected arrival of the French—than she felt justly indignant at having wasted so much emotion. No one but herself knew how many tears she had shed in the silence of the night, over Jasper Fleming's untimely fate. Grief for him had completely spoiled her enjoyment of a most delightful winter—and nearly spoiled her eyes too, as Cousin Maverick had noticed. She had detested Philadelphia for no other reason, than because it was so near Germantown—where she had all this while imagined Jasper Fleming might lie buried, with perhaps not even a stone to mark his grave! It was solely from this consideration, that she had declined to take part in the *Mischianza*, and had even allowed Captain André to believe that her refusal had been inspired by jealousy of Peggy Shippen!

Althea was not angry with Jasper for being alive—on the contrary, she was exceedingly glad—how glad, there would now be plenty of time to think about. But she felt positively enraged with him for having been reported dead, and with herself for having suffered so much on account of a false report. Most maddening thought of all, he had perhaps seen the ridiculous spectacle she had just made of herself! She determined to meet him with so much coolness that, if he had observed anything, he should be quickly disabused of the idea that *he* had been the cause of her indisposition!

This resolve greatly contributed to her recovery; she presently declared herself quite restored, and before supper was announced, and the ladies' cavaliers came to take them in, had

arranged a neat little sentence with which to greet Colonel Fleming—a sentence which should put their after-conversation upon a proper footing, and leave no place for any sentimental weakness, and which should moreover show the Colonel that other people could perhaps be as unconcerned as he.

CHAPTER LIX.

ALTHEA TEARS HER RUFFLE.

THE Mischianza supper was not the least brilliant part of the festival. Precisely at midnight, supper was announced, and some large folding-doors—concealed till now by an artful device of Captain André's—were suddenly thrown open, discovering a magnificent saloon more than two hundred feet long, painted in the Italian style, to resemble an arbour, with festoons of vine-leaves. A vast number of pier-glasses, lustres, and wax-tapers—all trimmed with ribbons and artificial flowers, like those in the ballroom—lighted up every part of the hall.

As the General and the Admiral entered the supper-room (to which an inclined platform led down by an easy descent), four-and-twenty black slaves, in Oriental dresses, and with silver collars and bracelets, appeared in two lines, bowing to the very ground.

The supper was laid with four hundred and thirty covers. Althea, who was led in by Lieutenant Wickham of the Rangers, found herself seated between that waggish young gentleman and Parson Badger of the Artillery—who made them very merry by repeating the comments of his host, John Fields, on the festival.

"Friend Fields is a very plain friend," says the Parson; "as plain as a pike-staff, or as a coat without buttons, or as the nose on his own visage, which is likewise of the plainest. 'So, Friend Badger,' says he to me t'other day, 'they tell me thee is to have a grand junketing over to Walnut-Grove, before long.' 'Yes,' says I; 'and if you'll come, I engage to get you a ticket.' 'Nay, friend,' says he, 'I've read in the Prophet Dan'el of Belshazzar's feast, and that's as much as I want to know about such things.'"

"A death's-head at a banquet would be nothing to a Quaker at the Mischianza," says Wickham. "'Twas a rash

offer, Parson. What if the Spirit had moved honest John to take you at your word, and come to prophesy against us!"

So merry was the party at this table, that Captain André—who, with the other Knights of the Blended Rose and their ladies, sat at the next—called out to the Parson that he had just become aware of a sad oversight.

"What's that, Captain?" asks his reverence, tossing off a glass. "For my part, I've nothing to complain of."

"We should have appointed a chaplain to the Knights," says André; "I protest, the ladies at your table have done nothing but laugh at your wit, ever since we sat down to supper."

"Captain André is jealous of his Reverence," cries Peggy Chew, who has been rallying Surgeon Beaumont on the incongruity of the chief actor of comedy undertaking the serious office of a herald.

"You remind me, Miss Peggy, that I've one last *oyez* to make to-night," returns the surgeon, "and I'll be off to prepare for it, before you upset my natural gravity."

So saying, he slips out, and a few minutes afterwards, there is a flourish heard without, and enter the Herald of the Blended Rose with his trumpets, and proclaims the King's health, which is drunk to another flourish of trumpets, all the company standing. The Herald next proclaimed the health of the Queen, of the Royal Family, of the Army and Navy, and their Commanders, and lastly, of the Knights and their Ladies, and the Ladies in general—all which toasts were drunk with due honours, and a blast on the trumpets.

Althea had promised the first minuet after supper to Captain André. During its progress, she cast many furtive glances round the ballroom, but without discovering the person she sought. Captain André rallied her on being so *distracte*. "Confess, Miss Digby," he whispered, "that, when you saw the charming Miss Peggy Shippen, you felt an amiable regret at having unkindly refused to wear so becoming an attire."

"Confess, Captain André," she retorted, "that sweet Peggy Shippen became it better than I should have done."

"If Miss Peggy Shippen is an angel," says the Captain, bowing gallantly, with his hand on his heart, "that does not prevent Miss Althea Digby from being a queen."

"Whenever you pay me compliments, Captain André, I remember the proverb, 'practice makes perfect,'" says Althea, with a sly malice in her tone, and a mischievous smile in her eye.

"I protest, Miss Digby——"

"That I am the last comer?" cried Althea, laughing.

"It only rests with you to be so," said André in a low tone.

"Nay, we allow nothing but jesting to-night," returned Althea, making him a low curtsy as the quadrille ended.

"'Tis, I believe, your own rule. Take me, if you please, down to the hall—'tis so hot here."

"Are you for ever obdurate?" asked André, as they went downstairs.

"I protest, Captain André, I will hear no more from so fickle a Knight. You have been doing battle this very day for another lady, and you offer me the fag end of your wit! I protest, 'tis too much. I'll listen to no more compliments from you—until to-morrow morning."

André was puzzled by her manner. Her words were by no means discouraging, but her manner seemed to his quick apprehension to convey a covert defiance.

"Be it as you command," he said lightly. "May I at least have the honour of fetching you a syllabub?"

"No; I wish nothing," she replied; "'tis scarce five minutes since supper. I believe I see a gentleman that I know, and should like to speak with a moment," she added in the same indifferent tone.

Following the direction of her eyes, André saw Colonel Fleming at the door which led to the garden. He was standing so nearly in the same position in which Althea had seen him by the blaze of the fireworks, that the remembrance of that moment shot a disconcerting thrill through her. Under the more moderate beams of the candles, however, there was nothing ghostly about him, although the ill-timed merriment he had witnessed—and possibly the effort necessary on his part to meet Althea with apparent calmness—may have imparted unusual sternness to his countenance.

"I've always understood that you had a correspondence with the rebels," whispered André in Althea's ear; and added aloud,—*"I leave you, then, under the escort of Colonel Fleming, whose acquaintance I had the honour of making this evening."*

The gentlemen bowed ceremoniously to each other, and André turned on his heel. Thanks to Mrs. Maverick's mysterious allusions, he was perfectly well aware that the Colonel had a brother who had served under Arnold in Canada, and was desperately in love with Miss Digby, and of many other

interesting particulars—all of which had led him to conceive a hearty dislike for the young gentleman in question, and not to look with much favour on his relation.

"I did not expect to see you here to-night, Colonel Fleming—we heard on excellent authority that you was killed at Germantown."

This was the speech which Althea had concocted, while she sat getting over her fainting-fit, and which she had thought would be a good beginning to a conversation in which she was resolved to betray no foolish weakness. Being half afraid to say it, she delivered it with an air of defiance, which did not improve the sound of it, and she perceived with infinite satisfaction that it had hit its mark.

Jasper started, muttered a smothered exclamation, and made an angry movement with the hand which held his hat, while a red flush mounted to his brow, and, instantly retreating, left him very pale. Not one of these signs of emotion was lost on Miss Digby—who, however, was herself in a sad internal flutter, and felt her knees tremble under her—nor was the great and successful effort with which he almost instantly suppressed them, as he replied with grave irony,—

"As you see, Miss Digby, I still live—perhaps I shall make a better use of my next opportunity."

Human nature will assert itself sometimes, in the most stoical of us. Jasper Fleming had long since resolved that duty and honour forbade him so much as attempting to step between his brother and Althea Digby; and he had of set purpose fostered the natural antagonism, which he thought he perceived she felt towards him, in the hope that he would thus make his own part easier to play. But he had not expected such a reception as this; and he noted the indifference with which she could suddenly see him alive from the dead, with a pang so sharp, that he could easily have imagined he had just received a stab somewhere very near his heart. Such pangs are indeed sharper than bodily ones, and rankle much longer. Jasper had known what it was in the heat of battle to scarcely feel a wound; but no excitement of conflict could have made him insensible to this invisible thrust, dealt him by a woman's hand. For a moment it bewildered his senses, as though it had been an actual blow.

"I see I intrude on your meditations, Colonel Fleming," said Althea, piqued at his silence and annoyed at the self-possession he had shown on meeting her. "Perhaps—as you have,

"I'm told, Mr. Washington's affairs on your mind—I distract you."

"I was only most unprofitably considering what an inveterate habit of hope we have, and how little experience avails against it," returned Jasper—so bitterly that Althea was sorry she had gone quite so far. While she was wondering whether he had seen her at the window, and resolving to ascertain this important fact, even if she had to put the question point-blank, he continued,—“May I beg the favour of a few minutes' private conversation with you, Miss Digby? I have a message to you from my brother Noel, which I can scarce deliver here——”

“There is no one in the garden just now,” said Althea, glad of an opportunity to escape some curious eyes, that were watching Miss Digby talking to the rebel officer.

“I saw you at the window, while the fireworks were displayed,” he said, as they turned to descend the steps. He paused an instant, but Althea said nothing. She seemed to be engaged with the skirt of her gown, but Jasper saw her confusion—she had blushed so vividly, that her very neck was dyed under her kerchief.

“I fancied you had perceived me,” he continued; “I even imagined that you appeared a little startled.”

The discovery that Althea was not looking upon him for the first time, when she uttered those hard-hearted words, most unreasonably consoled him. He ought to have guessed it, he said to himself—'twas an unwomanly speech, and Althea's heart was incapable of making it, except by an after-thought, when her pride had had time to assert itself.

As for Althea, she would willingly have made some disclaimer, but no words would come. She had overrated her strength. She was conscious of an almost irresistible inclination to burst out laughing—or crying—she was not sure which. Lest it should be to cry, she resolved to remain silent altogether. A few steps took them out of the glare of the many-coloured oil-lamps, into a darkness which left the forms of things vaguely discernible, but wrapped all those forms in a monotonous duskiness. The stars shone large and yellow in a sky which seemed lighted by the memory of moonlight—or perhaps some lingering beams of sunset still clung about its blackness, as mists hang long on the murky blueness of pine-forests; and the sweet night air came to them laden with the breath of flowers. Everything was full of summer-calm, and richness, and repose. Althea felt

her ears throb with the silence into which they seemed to have stepped. There was no sound but that of their footsteps on the gravel—and Althea's own heart, knocking so loud against her bodice, that she fancied Colonel Fleming must hear it.

Althea was recalling their last meeting—perhaps the least satisfactory reminiscence she could have chosen. On that occasion, Colonel Fleming had rescued Mrs. Maverick and herself from a very unpleasant predicament—and, having done so, had hurried off, to order out some whale-boats, or to superintend some other equally treasonable proceeding. It was almost two years since that night, and he had been in arms against his King ever since—and she had been beguiled into weeping for him. She seemed to be sitting once more in Mrs. Quackenboss's best parlour, watching Jasper as he stood there, apparently unconscious of her presence—occupied doubtless with his piratical whale-boats.

"It is a long while since we last met, Miss Digby," observed Jasper, suddenly breaking the silence. "I cannot hope that the events which have happened since then have led you to look with less disfavour on the cause I represent; but they have, I trust, taught you to think of it with less contempt."

"And I, Colonel Fleming, had trusted that all the bloodshed and misery we have seen since then, might perhaps have led you to regret the part you had in bringing it about."

Althea spoke now with no bitterness—there was even a trace of pleading in her tone, but her words stung him to the quick.

"I am more immutably fixed in it than ever!" he replied hotly. "Do you not know, Miss Digby, that we prize most highly that which has cost us most dear? And do you think that, having shed so much of our blood, and sacrificed so much that is dearer than life itself, in the maintenance of our rights, we will now tamely let them go? But we surely do not meet merely to renew our old quarrel," he added in an altered tone. "I have a message to you from my brother. I know not how you will receive it in this mood—yet this may be, and probably is, the only opportunity I shall have of delivering it. 'Twas to do so, I came here to-night."

"I can never receive any message from your brother otherwise than kindly," replied Althea. The tears came into her eyes, and into her voice, as she spoke—something within her was fairly bursting to express a little tenderness, and here there seemed to be a safe vent.

"I hope, then," said Jasper, as they sauntered into a narrower alley, "that his message will at least not offend you. Probably you do not know that he is now in the camp at Valley Forge, and has been there since February. General Arnold is still invalided, but as soon as he recovers sufficiently, Noel intends to serve under him again. That, however, is not what I have to say to you. You must have been long aware, Miss Digby, of the feelings with which you have inspired him——"

"Indeed, I never tried or wished to do it—and I hoped that by this time he had forgot me, as I've often begged of him to do."

Althea spoke quickly—her heart beat so fast, she could scarcely draw her breath.

"Do you think a man can forget when he is bidden?" said Jasper quietly. "Noel bids me say, that if you have remembered him but half as often as he has remembered you, he will be content."

"In the sense that he means it, I have not remembered him," said Althea, trying in vain to keep the flutter at her heart out of her voice. She was dreadfully agitated. "Give him my sincere sisterly affection," she continued, struggling to keep from tears; "and tell him I never think of my dear brother, without grateful thoughts of him who saved him."

"He will not be content with that," said Jasper. "He asks much more."

"I have no more to give him," said Althea, in a constrained voice.

She had refused Jasper's arm; they were walking side by side, but as far apart as the narrow path allowed.

"I hear something in your voice, Miss Digby," said Jasper, standing still, "which tells me that those cold words do not come from a cold heart. Are you sacrificing Noel's and your own happiness to the miserable rancours of the times? Let me use a brother's freedom with you for once——" He took her hand, and even amidst the gloom of the sombre trees above them, she knew that his eyes were fixed searchingly upon her. "Remember," he went on, "that as you once said to me, this unhappy war must one day come to an end—may come to an end very soon. Will you give him no hope in the future?"

"I can never marry him," she said—he felt her hand grow cold in his own as she spoke. "'Tis impossible that you can understand the pain with which I say it—but I never can—I

never will! Think that I've vowed it—think anything—only believe I'm sincere, and speak of it no more!"

"Is that your last reply to him?" asked Jasper, still detaining her hand, which she would have drawn away.

"Yes"—she said—with a sigh which seemed to come out of the very depths of some secret grief. Then she suddenly almost snatched her hand away, and turned back towards the broad walk in front of the house.

Jasper was puzzled. What was the meaning, he wondered, of the emotion which he saw plainly she was trying to conceal? Had she some other attachment? He had heard her name that night coupled with Captain André's. Or did she, as he still inclined to believe, love Noel? and did only that fatal word *rebel* stand in the way? Only! Jasper knew too well that that word was a wide gulf, across which only a mighty love could leap. Well—Noel must plead his cause himself.

"She may be too proud to own to me what she will confess more easily to him," he thought. "I can do no more—to plead for another with the woman one loves, is more than flesh and blood can endure."

"Do you mean to continue with Mr. Washington's army until the war is over?" asked Althea abruptly.

"I shall fight as long as there is anything left of me," replied Jasper. He said it in a very hard tone—it seemed to Althea, that he wished to remind her in the most offensive manner possible of all that divided them. This had once been a favourite pastime with herself, but she resented it in him all the more for that.

"You can never hope for a second stroke of fortune like poor General Burgoyne's disaster," she said. "I hoped that by this time, you, at least, would have seen the policy of accepting these generous concessions which His Majesty offers, and so putting an end to all this misery."

"'Tis too late," replied Jasper. "Nothing short of complete Independence is possible now."

"'Tis impossible your undisciplined militia can stand before the King's troops, except by some mere chance," she said sharply.

"Such chances have happened though, and will again," he replied—Althea thought he was bent on provoking her. "We are getting used to war. Be assured, Miss Digby, we shall conquer or die. And for my part," he added bitterly, "life

has not been so sweet to me of late, but that I have sometimes hoped some bullet, kinder than the rest, may put an end to all my earthly perplexities—and to that conflict with myself, so much harder to wage than the other. But 'tis unmanly to speak thus," he said, interrupting himself. "Now that we have come so far on towards our goal, there is surely enough for a man to live for, whatever his private griefs may be."

"Are you so unhappy?" said Althea—and her voice faltered.

"A very common case, Miss Digby. I had the misfortune—or the folly, call it whichever you will—to fix my affections where they can never meet with the least return."

"How do you know that?" she asked quickly—and then was angry with herself that she had asked it.

"The lady cordially detests me," said Jasper sarcastically. "I have long ago resigned myself to her hatred, for there is an insuperable obstacle in the way—I am in honour bound never to seek her love. But I confess to having been weak enough to wish to gain her esteem, and to have hoped for it, long after I ought to have seen I hoped in vain. I have, however, every reason to believe that her dislike is only exceeded by her contempt. Pray, let us talk on some more pleasant topic—we have contrived to find so many disagreeable ones in the last half-hour, that I'm sure you must regret I did not fall at Germantown."

"I am quite unaware, Colonel Fleming, of having given you any right to suppose me capable of so wicked a feeling," said Althea in an unsteady voice. He was, she felt, very cruel.

"Our silence says as much as our words," he replied. "You did not—I could not but observe it—so much as pay me the compliment of saying you was glad to see me recovered. I admire the candour which will not utter a sentiment it does not feel; yet, I confess, it hurt me. War itself admits of some exchange of civilities, and in looking forward to this meeting, I had pleased myself with the fancy that you would at any rate forbear to reproach me."

At the word "recovered," Althea's heart smote her—then he had been wounded! She would gladly have expressed her sympathy, but for the fear of showing more than she intended.

"If you will not give me credit for it unless I say it, I will say it," she said—struggling hard with a lump in her throat, which had for several minutes been causing her great inconve-

nience. "I am sincerely glad; and I think the report of your death perhaps caused me quite as much regret as you would have cared that it should do." It was with the utmost difficulty that she restrained her tears, and she could not help her voice trembling. Had Jasper been one whit less exasperating—had he permitted himself to show but a little weakness—she felt that she must have betrayed herself. But he wholly misunderstood her.

"She is sorry for Noel's brother," he thought bitterly, perceiving how deeply moved she was. "She will not send him a kind word, but she cannot conceal the vital interest she takes in all belonging to him, and her detestation of me is but another proof of it."

He dared not trust his voice to speak. He had come there, resolved that no sign of his own feelings should escape him, but he felt that he was rapidly losing his self-control, and that he had already said too much. The sooner the interview was over, the better. Just then, they came out into the space in front of the house—they could hear the music, and see the lights and the passing figures. The sight irritated Jasper still more—he felt he could endure the torture no longer, and he involuntarily quickened his steps.

It has been remarked before, that trifling causes sometimes bring about very considerable results. Colonel Fleming and Miss Digby would most likely have gone on misunderstanding and exasperating each other, until events had parted them for ever, if Althea had not just then caught one of her ruffles in the clasp of the Colonel's cloak, as it hung dangling from his shoulder. The ruffle was of Mechlin lace, and had belonged to her mother—for both of which reasons she was anxious, even in this agitated moment, not to tear it. There was a seat at a corner of the garden walk, and a stream of light from one of the open windows of the house fell across one end of it, leaving all the rest in shadow. Althea stopped here, to see how best to disengage herself. But her eyes were full of tears, her hands were trembling, and the lace was awkwardly entangled. The Colonel stood stock-still, and never offered to assist. Althea impatiently pulled the cloak from his shoulder, the better to get at the clasp—but her tears blinded her, and she only made bad worse. "I cannot do it," she said pettishly, and feeling ready to cry. "Pray help me!"

As he obeyed her, she looked up, and saw what his cloak

had hitherto concealed—the sleeve of Jasper's left arm was empty from the elbow.

Althea uttered a stifled cry. "I did not know"—she gasped under her breath—and, sinking down on the seat, she covered her face with her hands (tearing the ruffle into ribbons as she did so), and burst into a passion of tears.

Jasper was greatly surprised and touched; but, as often happens, so soon as Althea lost her self-possession, he regained some of his own. But he tried in vain to calm her—at every word he uttered, she only sobbed the more wildly.

"My dear Miss Digby, the occasion does not warrant so many tears," he said, as he carefully freed her ruffle. "There—I do not think it is much torn."

He spoke lightly; but the sight of the proud Althea weeping so bitterly on his account was almost too much for his resolution. It was by a great effort that he spoke calmly.

"We must expect such accidents in war," he said; "and if you did not think I was on the wrong side, I would tell you that nothing in my life ever gave me more satisfaction than the conviction I had shed my blood in the cause of my country."

Althea had laid her head on the end of the seat. It was a hard unsympathising pillow, but she watered it with her tears.

Finding that argument failed, Jasper next tried turning the matter into a jest—but this was worse still, and only made Althea sob more bitterly than ever. A burst of dance-music came floating out on the night wind.

"'Twas an unpardonable piece of stupidity on my part, to let you be so shocked!" he cried at last in despair. "But by the way you spoke of Germantown, I imagined you knew——"

"Do you think if I had known, I'd have said what I did?" cried Althea impetuously, lifting up her tear-stained face, and turning to him—he had sat down beside her. "I was not shocked—do you think I've never seen wounds before? But I deserve it! Yet—oh, what a wretch I must seem to you, that you think it so strange I should shed a few tears at seeing you——"

She broke down again. Even now he did not understand; but as she sat on his left, he leaned towards her, and so passed his right arm round her, and drew her head to his breast—that he should hold her this once, could, he thought, be no treason to Noel—it seemed to him like an embrace before death.

She let her head rest there without resistance—he even

felt her cling to his arm. Her sobs came slower and quieter, till they almost died away in long-drawn sighs—but still she clung to him, and once she softly stroked his arm.

"Dearest Althea," he said gently, "do you think I do not see that if you show all this tenderness for me, it must be because you feel much more for Noel—however your pride may make you deny it?"

Althea did not speak.

"Is it not so, Althea?"

This time, she withdrew from his encircling arm (but not unkindly), and turned a little away from him.

"Is it not so?" he insisted, taking one of her hands and holding it fast. "And will you not give me some other message? For God's sake, Althea, don't trifle at such a moment as this! If Noel has a rival, you owe it him to let him know it. He bid me ask you—nothing short of that, he says, will make him resign his hopes of winning you at last. Let your heart speak, Althea——"

"You are cruel!" she sobbed, turning away her head, and trying to get her hand free.

"I must know—I will know! If it is Captain André——"

"No, no!" cried Althea, still struggling to free herself—but more feebly.

"If 'tis not he, 'tis some other. I would not press you indelicately, but I am come to a pass where I must know the truth—and, by Heaven, I will know it!" There was a rising passion in his voice—he would not be denied.

"You torture me!" she said. "Well then—since nothing else will do—tell Noel, though he is dear to me, there is another dearer still—whom I've tried to hate—who believes I hate him. Oh, I have been a proud wicked woman! I have hardened my heart against the noblest, truest heart in the world, and I knew it all the while—but God knows, I repent of it now!"

There was a moment's silence, and then Jasper said, in a low broken voice,—

"Althea—Althea—were those tears mere womanly compassion, or am I the happiest man alive?"

Where they sat, they could not see each other's faces clearly, but her eyes sought his, before she answered,—

"They were not compassion."

And then, with a movement of infinite tenderness, she bent that proud head, and kissed the hand which clasped her own.

CHAPTER LX.

MAGNANIMITY OF CAPTAIN DIGBY.

That you were once unkind befriends me now.

THESE mortal foes, thus suddenly become lovers, had a great deal to say to each other, and but little time to say it in. At any moment, some of the revellers might come out and interrupt them—and in two or three days at most, the fierce tide of war must sweep them far apart once more.

If Jasper had wooed and won her in happier times, Althea would have tormented him with a thousand caprices, and shown herself coy to the end. She would have doled out her kindness as a queen does her favours, and frowned a dozen times for once that she had smiled. But now, knowing that this first embrace might perhaps be the last, the haughty Althea became on a sudden all passion and tenderness. She lavished kind words and loving caresses on him—she alternately wept and laughed, and reproached herself with her past unkindness.

“When I think of what I said to-night,” she cried, “it is as though I had struck you—but I will make up for it! I will make you forget it!”

“I do not wish to forget it—now,” he said, drawing her closer to his breast. “’Twill make the remembrance of this hour all the sweeter.”

“And you could believe I preferred Noel to you!”

“Indeed,” he said drily, “I might have known that you spoke too kindly of him.”

“I have a most sincere affection for him,” said Althea, with a laugh which ended in something like a sob. “He is a dear generous boy; and I’m not sure—if I had never known you—but oh, Jasper, I never hurt you, but I hurt myself far more!” This was not the case, but Althea sincerely believed it. “You will know it some day,” she said—“when I have had time to show you how tender I can be to those I love.”

“I always knew it,” he said. “I knew that, proud as you are, your tenderness can be greater than your pride. Your very hatred—as I fancied it—showed me that. It had such a warmth in it——”

“That I wonder you never suspected ’twas but love gone

awry," she whispered, hiding her face on his breast. "But you said one thing I can't forgive you—you said I despised you. You knew—you must have known—that that, at least, was impossible!"

"Nay," he returned, "how should I know it? You had seen me weak in body, and peevish in mind—worn by sickness, and cast down in spirits——"

"And I chose that time to be unkind," she sighed. "I can never forgive myself, and though you are so generous, you make nothing of it, I cannot forget it. But, indeed, Jasper, I did not mean to slam that door!"

"I never thought you did——" he said, "though 'twas not then you hurt me most. But do not reproach yourself too much, my sweetest Althea—'tis all made up for now. And I was a peevish wretch; but I was at so cruel a disadvantage—the fear of finding myself trying to supplant my own brother was for ever before me—and, indeed, the thought of what I must say to him embitters even this moment."

"I will tell him myself," said Althea. "You shall carry the letter. I will tell him I always knew you for what you are. 'Twas that enraged me—I saw you, as I thought, obstinately bent on espousing a bad cause, yet felt myself forced to honour you. I'm not converted to that cause; but now——"

"Well, my staunch Althea," said Jasper, as she paused, "what do you say now? you will not hurt me—but let me hold your hand while you say it."

"Now," she replied, pressing his hand to her heart, "now, I remember what you said to me once—that 'tis of less moment what part we take, than how and out of what motives we take it. Whatever regrets I may have as to the part you have taken, I know you have taken it heroically. But oh, my dear, my dear! when I think that in a day or two at most you must go away into an enemy's camp—and that the next time you meet those masqueraders we hear making merry, it may be in battle, I know not how to bear it!"

She clung to him, as though they were to part that moment.

"My poor girl," he said sadly, "you should not have loved a rebel! 'Tis hard to think that we only meet to part—Philadelphia is certain to be evacuated as soon as the French fleet arrives—and you, I suppose, will go to New York, where you will be as far out of my reach as ever."

"There's a great talk of our going," replied Althea; "and some say that Sir Henry has positive orders—but nothing is publicly known. And if we go," she added, with anguish in her voice, "we shall never get to New York without another battle!"

"We are all in God's hands," said Jasper solemnly; "and to Him I commend myself and you."

* * * * *

It was a warm summer's night, but Jasper must needs wrap Althea in the cloak which had caused all the mischief. "It will keep me all the warmer hereafter," he said gallantly—but Althea shivered, and begged him not to talk of the future. This was not difficult, where there was so much to say of the past.

It occurs at last, even to lovers, that the night is far spent—an uneasy sense of this fact (suggested by the first faint grayness of the dawn) had begun to afflict Althea's mind, even before they heard a step crunching the gravel behind them.

"'Tis Fred, come to look for me," said Althea—hastily throwing off Jasper's martial garment, and rising from her seat.

"Jack André said I should find you out here," said Fred, as he came up. "My dear Fleming," he added, grasping Jasper's hand with a great deal of feeling, and all but embracing him, "I'm truly glad—I mean, of course, I'm truly sorry! But perhaps you don't know that we heard you was killed outright? I assure you, my dear fellow, I'm more sorry for this misfortune than I know how to tell you—and if I don't seem as much so as I am, 'tis because we all made certain as you was killed—Cousin Maverick had a letter from Boston to say so, and how cut up your uncle was about it."

"I know that such a report reached him," said Jasper; "but as I wrote to him instantly, I cannot think how you heard it. I assure you, I deeply feel your kind expressions——"

"You don't, I hope, take me for a brute," said Fred. This was a thrust intended for Althea, who was standing a little way off, and had, Fred fancied—it was a pure fancy—tossed her head at these kind expressions. "Besides, you know that, rebel or not, I've a great regard for you personally. I wonder we never heard of your being alive—but I fancy you've known a deal more in your camp of what was going on inside the town, nor we've ever been able to find out about you."

Jasper laughed. "We have, I think, had a pretty good

general idea of your past proceedings," he said. "Your intentions just now are not quite equally clear to us—but about them I must not ask you."

"'Tis a cursed shame you and Noel aint of our side!" cried Fred. "By the bye, I aint asked you how he is? Did I hurt him much? Has he told you we encountered each other on the field of Stillwater? I promise you, I had but just time to turn the flat of my sword! But I'm confident I did turn it——"

"He appears none the worse for it now," replied Jasper; "and he has told me that he saw you start back, as you perceived who it was you was cutting down. He told me, too, what a determined stand you made——"

"We was destroyed, Fleming—poor General Burgoyne was destroyed—sent to his perdition by a cowardly traitor! If there don't some impeachments come out of that affair, there's no justice left in England!" cries Fred. "But, thank God, Noel hath gotten over the hurt I gave him! 'Twas an ill return to make him for preserving me from the savages—but I took him for General Arnold. Well, 'tis growing monstrous late, and Cousin Maverick is gone home, and desired me to bring Ally. May we not see you? We're in Market Street, just opposite the *Paracelsus' Head*—the house has got two dormer windows painted green—that is, Ally and Cousin Maverick are there, and I'm always in and out."

"I will certainly do myself the pleasure of calling," returned Jasper, as Fred shook him cordially by the hand.

"By the bye," he said, "where are you to sleep? Can I do anything for you? Pray command me!"

Jasper replied that Captain André had offered to accommodate him—adding that he must go in and find him, but would enjoy the cool of the garden a few minutes longer first. Jasper felt that he must be alone a few moments, before he faced strangers.

"Well, good-night, my dear fellow—let us see you to-morrow," said Fred, once more shaking his hand. "I'm most rejoiced to hear that Noel is well—he hath, I assure you, been much on my mind."

Then they said good-night again; and Fred and Althea went up the steps into the great hall, which was now nearly deserted, though the dancing was still going on above.

"How pale you look, Ally!" exclaimed Fred, when they

came into the full light. "I hope you aint heard any bad news?"

"One may look tired, I suppose, at three in the morning—for I suppose 'tis near that," says Althea. "'Tis certainly very near dawn."

"I'll lay my life she has been crying," thought Fred, while Althea found her muffler. "I wonder what they've talked about! I'll not pump her to-night—she seems a little put out. I always thought she'd a leaning towards Branhholm, and of course she naturally feels seeing his brother. I hope, Ally, that you told Colonel Fleming we should be glad to see him," he said, as they went out into the street. "I fancied you was rather cool, when I invited him. I thought you had got over your old dislike to him—and, rebel though he may be, I've the greatest possible regard for him, and you'll much oblige me by showing him some attention."

"I consider I have already shown Colonel Fleming as much attention as he can possibly expect," said Althea in an odd tone—which Fred took for obstinacy.

"I vow, Ally, I've never been able to understand you!" he said, much annoyed. "No man ever had a more affectionate sister than I've found in you—and yet sometimes I've seen you show what in any other woman I should say was a downright want of feeling! I should have thought you'd have been a little affected at seeing poor Fleming mangled like that! No one ever called me soft-hearted that I'm aware of, but when Jack André told me, it gave me quite a turn—I aint got over it yet. 'Tis a misfortune, let me remind you, that might befall me any day! I thought there was a great want of feeling in your manner, when you bid him good-night. Now I come to think of it, I don't believe as you did bid him good-night—I don't believe as you took the trouble to speak—and I fear Fleming must have observed it. But I've always heard say as women can be harder-hearted than men!"

Fred walked home in a fume, resolved, by marked attention on his own part, to show Colonel Fleming that he at least did not forget the obligations of friendship and humanity. If he, who really had some ground for considering Fleming as his rival, could afford to be generous, 'twas hard indeed if Ally could not be decently civil!

CHAPTER LXI.

AN EXCHANGE OF CIVILITIES.

FRED came in late to dinner, next day, full of all that he and Jack André and the rest had been doing at Walnut-Grove—packing up, and returning the pier-glasses, lustres, candlesticks, and all the other borrowed articles.

"We've sent 'em all back decked out just as they was, and there aint a single one of 'em broke," he remarked, with much complacency. "Hang me, if I don't think Jack André's the cleverest fellow I ever knew in my life! And I shall always think, Ally, as you might have had him, if you'd have chose to."

"Thank you, dear brother—you flatter me inexpressibly," replied Althea—in a tone which kept the exact equilibrium between earnest and jest. Fred looked hard at her.

"I don't believe you mean that," he said. "It's my opinion, Ally, as you've a deuced deal too good an opinion of yourself to feel flattered at any man's admiring you."

"Dear brother, if we was not at table, I would make you a curtsy," said his sister. "I wish, though, you'd tell me where you learned so much about me, and women in general? 'Tis a complete mystery to me—but I think it dates from Boston."

At this home-thrust, Fred reddened—but Mrs. Maverick, who was serving the custard, saved him the trouble of making a counter-hit, by observing that Boston had had a good deal to do with other folks as she could mention. At which Althea's cheeks became redder than the rose which blows in June, and Fred determined to try and get out of her what Fleming had said; whatever it was, it had upset her a good deal, and she didn't seem to have got over it yet.

Fred presently observed—keeping his eye fixed on his sister as he spoke—that he had met Colonel Fleming, that morning, going to wait upon Sir Henry. Althea undoubtedly blushed again, but she ate her custard diligently, and as she never raised her eyes from her plate, Fred was able to give his mind to watching her. He was so intent on doing this, that he returned unmeaning answers to several of Mrs. Maverick's questions, and caused that good lady to say sarcastically that he was so absent, one would think he was in love—on which Fred

blushed himself, but protested that he was half-asleep, and had nearly dropped off, while they were packing up the mirrors.

Mrs. Maverick had heard from Captain André that Colonel Fleming was in Philadelphia, come in about the removal of the Convention troops from Cambridge—the Captain had, however, honourably abstained from mentioning that Althea was at that moment talking to him out in the garden. She had heard about his wound, and was particular to ask Fred how he was looking—'twas a shocking thing, to be sure, she remarked, and, for her part, she bore the poor young man no ill-will, and indeed had always liked him, ever since he was, as one might say, her prisoner. Mrs. Maverick never forgot that she was a cousin of Governor Hutchinson's (a great man once, though his star had now set), and always spoke as though she were a component part of the Powers that Be. Having expressed herself thus kindly, and seen that the cloth was laid smoothly away in the high chest of drawers, she retired to take her afternoon nap.

Thus left alone with Ally, Fred cast about for the best way to begin pumping her as to what Fleming might have said about Mary. Fred had stolen an hour from his task of dismantling Walnut-Grove, to indite a letter to Mary, but was not quite sure if he had the courage to send it.

He had just asked—with a much overdone unconcern—whether Colonel Fleming had told her anything very particular last night, when the Colonel himself was announced. Fred received him with a warmth which might fairly be called brotherly, and which Althea was wicked enough to secretly enjoy, though she was very far indeed from feeling light-hearted.

The Colonel, it appeared, was to return to Mr. Washington's camp that very afternoon—indeed his horses were waiting at the door—but would not go without paying his respects to Mrs. Maverick. He did not add, "and Miss Digby," and Fred was confirmed in his persuasion that Fleming was hurt by Ally's unfeelingness last night.

Hearing that Mrs. Maverick was gone to take a little rest after yesterday's fatigue, he begged she might not be disturbed on his account; and, in answer to Captain Digby's inquiries, said that his mother and cousin were in camp, and had been there all the winter. On hearing this, Fred's heart sank at least four feet below its normal level, and felt as though it had taken up a permanent residence in his boots. He saw it all—

Mary had gone to be near Jasper! Mary, who was always all kindness and affection, would of course be fonder of him now than ever!

As he was hastily revolving these agonising apprehensions, it suddenly occurred to him, by a sort of inspiration, that perhaps if he left Ally alone with the Colonel for a few minutes, he might be more confidential. It would be better to know the worst; it might be no use to send that letter.

"If you'll excuse me a moment, Fleming, I'll fetch Cousin Maverick," he observed—adding with Macchiavellian cunning,—
"She'll never forgive it, if she don't see you."

"Is it true, Althea?" said Jasper, as soon as Fred's departing steps were heard mounting the uncarpeted oak stairs.
"How shall I assure myself I am not dreaming?"

The look Althea gave him was assurance enough; Colonel Fleming took courage from it, however, to assure himself still further, by an embrace to which she did not offer the least demur.

"And yet I fear I wrong you," he said, after what seemed a long silence. "How will your brother take it, when he hears of it? Am I not bringing you misfortune?"

"Fred rated me soundly last night, for not showing you sufficient attention—I told him I believed I'd shown you all you could expect, and he replied that I was an unfeeling wretch, and lectured me all the way home."

Althea said this, with one hand resting on his shoulder, and the other holding him by the breast of his coat (as Jasper's only arm was just then round her waist), and looking into his eyes with so much loving mischief in her own—though it was plain enough that there were tears not far behind the smile—that she completely turned his head, and he said no more about being a rebel, and bringing her unhappiness, but only repeated that he could not believe it; 'twas, he said, a thousand times too good to be true!

These tender passages, however satisfactory to the parties immediately concerned, were by no means what Captain Digby had intended, in leaving his sister and Colonel Fleming to a *tête-à-tête*. While they were making love, he was literally kicking his heels outside Mrs. Maverick's door, and trying to calculate how long it would be best to give them.

"'Twould be a pity to have Cousin Maverick go in just as Fleming had begun to be confidential," he sagely reflected;

and there is no knowing how long he might not have delayed, but that in one of the kicks in dumb-show, with which he was beguiling the time, he mistook his distance, and brought his foot against the panel of the door—with such prodigious effect that Mrs. Maverick hurriedly presented herself, all dishevelled from her afternoon nap.

“In Heaven’s name, what is the matter?” she exclaimed.

“Nothing—nothing at all; I fell against the door—caught my foot, I suppose,” stammered Fred, examining the offending member, as though he expected to find in it some explanation of the accident. “Colonel Fleming has come to pay his respects to you, that’s all—he’s downstairs——”

“I must say, Fred, you are the very awkwardest young man I ever knew,” said Mrs. Maverick, whose temper was as much ruffled as her attire by this rude awakening. “I do believe you’ve split the panel! Go down and tell Mr. Fleming I’m coming this instant; and pray be a little more thoughtful—you really behave like a bear in a china shop!”

Mrs. Maverick greeted Jasper very kindly, and never once uttered the word “rebel”—contenting herself with shaking her head as she lamented the sad times they lived in, and only referring in the most general terms to wrong-headed politicians, and the Best of Sovereigns. It was evident that Jasper’s empty sleeve disconcerted the good old lady’s logic quite as much as it appealed to her sympathy—perhaps she felt that argument would be thrown away on a man who had given such a pledge of his obstinacy. So, after a few very feeble struggles to testify to her principles, she allowed her heart to get the better of her. When he rose to take his leave, she pressed his hand in both hers, and, with tears in her eyes, assured him that she wished him well. “We will not say anything about anything else,” she said, patting his hand. “I wish you well from my heart, and I hope we may yet meet in better times.”

“My dear Madam,” replied Jasper, gallantly kissing her hand, “believe me, I feel your goodness deeply; but I already owe you a long account, which I can never hope to discharge.”

Althea was not in the room while these compliments were being exchanged—she had excused herself for a moment, that she might fetch a letter she had written to Mary, and which she had begged Colonel Fleming to favour. Fred took the opportunity of his sister’s absence to observe that he was very glad they were soon to leave Philadelphia—Ally had never been

well, or in spirits, since they came, though Heaven knew 'twas not for want of diversion. But somehow or other, ever since they came there, Ally had been out of sorts, and not like herself. Did not Colonel Fleming think her looking very pale ?

But before the Colonel could answer this question (artfully intended by Fred as a sort of indirect apology for Althea's cold demeanour last night), Mrs. Maverick struck in, and said that 'twas no wonder if Althea looked pale, after being up more than half the night—and all the excitement of yesterday—and especially the extreme sultry weather.

"I'm sure I never felt so oppressed as I did while they was letting off the fireworks," she remarked. "I thought I must have fainted, and Althea felt it more than me—she went off in a dead faint, just as they was showing the figure of Fame. I never knew any one go off more sudden in my life—I heard her give a sort of gasp, and before I could get hold of her, she was off. I never felt such a dead weight ; and when she came to, she was all of a tremble, and talking quite wild about something she fancied she'd seen down in the garden. I never knew her to faint before, all the time I've known her."

During this affecting recital, Colonel Fleming had the awkwardness to let fall his hat, which in a fidgety moment he had taken from the table where he had laid it down. Fred sprang to pick it up, but the Colonel had already recovered it, and seemed somewhat embarrassed at having been so clumsy ; he bit his lip, and positively blushed, as he caught Mrs. Maverick's eye.

At this instant, Althea returned with a small packet.

"I was just telling Mr. Fleming, my dear," says Mrs. Maverick—with the good-natured intention of covering his confusion—"how indisposed you was last night ; no one could wonder at it, I'm sure—I felt exactly the same myself—I can't imagine why I didn't go off too."

Althea crimsoned, as her eyes met Colonel Fleming's, and Fred, who was looking at her, said to himself that Ally's pride was beyond everything—of course, she was furious now at anybody's knowing she could faint like other people. He expected a sarcastic remark ; but Althea (still with flaming cheeks) put the packet into the Colonel's hand civilly enough, and even smiled as she said,—

"I have left it unsealed, that you may convince yourself

you are not being made the bearer of a treasonable correspondence."

"I hope she's took my words last night to heart," thinks Fred, on hearing this condescending speech.

The Colonel, as he took charge of the packet, observed that he hoped to deliver it that same night. Fred, upon this, begged to send his particular respects to the ladies, and added that Colonel Fleming might rely on his doing all that lay in his power, should either the ladies or Noel ever happen to be in need of any assistance.

"After what happened to poor General Burgoyne," he observed handsomely, "anything might happen to anybody, you know." At which naïve remark Colonel Fleming smiled, but thanked him kindly.

"I'll ride with you as far as the outpost," said Fred, when Jasper would have bade him farewell. "I've sent for a horse."

Then Jasper took Althea by the hand, and seemed for a moment as if he would say something. But he only kissed her hand, and went away without a word, Fred following him down.

Althea ran to the window, and leaned out. The street was half in sunshine, half in shadow. Colonel Fleming's black servant was holding his own and his master's horse—the latter was very impatient of standing. Fred's servant had just brought up the horse which he usually hired when he rode out in Philadelphia.

Althea saw the gentlemen come out from under the porch, and Fred hold the Colonel's stirrup while he mounted, and she heard him ask Jasper if he had got his pass ready to show. Jasper looked up, and bowed to the ladies at the window, just before they rode away.

"Good-bye! good-bye!" cried Althea, waving her handkerchief; and then they all clattered off. Althea watched them till they turned a corner and vanished.

"I'm sure I don't wonder you feel it, my dear," said Mrs. Maverick, seeing that Althea's eyes were overflowing—and wiping her own spectacles as she spoke.

Meanwhile, Fred was adroitly engaging Colonel Fleming to speak of Mary. "By the way," he said, as they came in sight of the guard-house, where the pass must be shown, "I had almost forgot"—this was a gross falsehood, for he had thought of little else all the way—"I should have enclosed this letter

with my sister's; but perhaps you will do me the kindness to give it for me to Miss Mary—I thought she might be amused with a little account of our *Mischianza*; perhaps we could put it up all under one in the packet you are kindly favouring——”

“I will not wait to do it now,” said Jasper—who had observed that Althea's packet was directed to himself, “but if you will entrust your letter to me, I'll undertake my cousin gets it as soon as possible.”

Fred insisted on accompanying Jasper as far as the outpost near the lime-kiln—whence, it was said, shrieks had been heard on windy nights, ever since Sykes the spy got tossed in and burned alive, in his struggle with a party that had waylaid him.

“I always thought the fellow looked a sneak,” observed Fred, commenting on this gruesome story. “It would take a great deal to make me go as a spy, even in an honourable way; but a fellow as can turn on his own friends *must* be a hound!”

They parted at last, with many expressions of mutual goodwill, and hopes on Fred's side for a speedy peace.

“I hope so indeed,” said Jasper. “But, then, fighting is not my trade.”

“It is mine,” said Fred. “But I never bargained for such a war as this. I don't wonder Keppel wouldn't serve. However, it can't last much longer. The Commissioners will set everything straight, as it was before.”

“My dear fellow,” said Jasper, “if you mean they can undo the past, I fear that's impossible. We can no more go back to what we were fifteen years ago, than you can go back and be seven years old again, with all your battles unfought—and you would, or I'm much mistaken, rather fight them over again than never have smelt powder.”

Fred laughed at this, but could not deny it. “But I don't see as it proves you can never be happy again under King George,” he said. “However, I think a man ought to take a side and stick to it; and I daresay if I'd have been born over here, I might have seen things different. I know, if I was a Tory Provincial, I couldn't do as some of 'em do—burning their old neighbours' houses over their heads, and shooting 'em down as if they was Indians, or wild beasts. Your uncle is too much of a gentleman to do that. When he was asked if he'd raise a

corps like De Lancey's, he said he'd never take up arms against his countrymen, however mistaken he might think 'em; and he forbade his son to do so either."

"Did he say that?" asked Jasper, his eyes kindling. "But indeed his heart was always wiser than his head! Good-bye, Captain Digby, and thank you for coming so far with me. We are, I hope, enemies that wish each other well, and would be friends if we could."

"The Commissioners will make us all friends, if you'll only listen to 'em," cried Fred, wringing Jasper's hand. "God bless you, Fleming, and don't forget the messages I gave you!"

Fred turned his horse's head, and rode slowly back, trying to recall the most important phrases of the letter which he had entrusted to Colonel Fleming. "Some people might have advised me to wait," he reflected; "but God knows when I might be able to get a letter to her again. Of course, if she does like Fleming, there's an end of it; but, after all, they've known each other all their lives, and may be only like brother and sister. Her being a rebel makes a confounded complication; but I'll eat my head, if Ally aint come to some sort of an understanding with the Colonel about Noel—and if she can get over the being a rebel, I don't see why I shouldn't. I'm sure, if the Commissioners bring 'em to reason, and my poor uncle's affairs should be settled anything like fair, there's many things I should like worse than turning Virginian planter, like old Butler. How pleased Fleming was, to be sure! I always admired the speech myself—the Roman father somewhere says something like it, I fancy—only, I think, that was in blank verse. I dare say he'll tell Mary."

Thus lost in thought, Captain Digby had jogged back as far as the guard-house, when he heard a voice close to him cry out,—“Hallo! my dear fellow! don't ride me down!” and perceived Jack André, coming jauntily along on foot.

“I saw you riding off with your rebel friend,” said André, eyeing him narrowly as he spoke. “I hope there are not many more like him among Washington's rabble—there'll be Old Harry to pay if there are. He is so damnably reasonable and cool. Your sister looked at him monstrous kind, I fancied, last night.”

“You're out for once, Jack,” returned Fred. “Ally never could abide him. 'Tis incomprehensible to me, for I should

have thought he was just the man to take her fancy—she was always fonder of learning nor me, and Fleming's quite the scholar. I really can't think how he learned so much, never having been in England. As soon as ever I came to know him though, I took to him amazingly—but, somehow or other, Ally and he never got on together. I've had to tell her once or twice that I thought she carried it too far."

"I did not observe the least appearance of dislike, I assure you," said André drily. "She concealed it perfectly from me. 'Tis odd she don't like him. By all the rules of natural perversity, she should have a vast admiration for him. Pope says—

'Every woman is at heart a rake;'

but perhaps he slandered the sex there. But 'tis certainly true that every woman hath a spice of rebellion in her composition—as we, poor devils, are always finding out to our cost; and I am magnanimous enough to allow that Colonel Fleming is an interesting rebel. He is a soldierly figure, and there's a stern republican plainness about him, which compels a sort of respect; and when he speaks, he speaks most confoundedly to the point. Then, too, that empty sleeve becomes him. I promise you, Digby, I should consider him a dangerous rival, was I about to enter the lists against him."

"He aint the least in the world of a ladies' man, though," said Fred—André had turned, and was walking beside his horse.

"All the more dangerous, then," replied André. "'Tis a fatal mistake to be too much of a ladies' man—that is, if one wishes to succeed with any one of 'em in particular."

"I've heard say the women like to conquer a conqueror," observed Fred sagely.

"Shallow philosophy, my dear fellow! they love a thousand times better to take a fort reputed impregnable."

"You've no great cause to complain, Jack—the women are all monstrous civil to you, I'm sure!"

"I was born under an unlucky star," said André, sighing. "And, if there's any truth in dreams, I am to die on a gibbet—I've told you the story. But I trust we shall soon have something else to think about than women's frowns. Your Colonel is off just in time—Sir Henry has heard by his spies that the Marquess La Fayette hath crossed the Schuykil and is encamped on Barren Hill—doubtless, to watch our movements; and

General Grant with Simcoe and the Rangers are to march to-night, in the hopes of cutting him off."

Mrs. Maverick observed to Althea, as they drank tea, that Mr. Fleming was certainly a perfectly well-bred young man—not so handsome as his brother—Virginians were much handsomer than New Englanders—but decidedly interesting. Althea did not speak, but Mrs. Maverick saw with considerable satisfaction that she wiped away a few tears, and did not even seem to care to hide them. In spite of all that Mrs. Maverick had said in Captain André's favour, in her heart she preferred Noel Branhholm; and seeing Althea in this unusually tender mood, she was at the moment engaged in the process known as putting two and two together—the two being, of course, Althea and Noel.

"Mr. Fleming seems to me to have more confidence than he used to have," she went on. "Though, to be sure," she said—interrupting herself as she recalled many passages of words in Boston—"he was always uncommon obstinate in his opinions. I thought him remarkable cheerful, considering all he has gone through. I used to fancy his spirits was rather low, when he was our prisoner. 'Tis an odd idea that a young man should be more cheerful than usual, when he has just lost an arm; but Mr. Fleming certainly appears to be in uncommon good spirits. I shouldn't be in the least surprised but what Mr. Washington (Mrs. Maverick would not have called him General for the world) has got something in the wind, and the knowledge of it hath put Mr. Fleming in spirits."

So much did this explanation of Colonel Fleming's state of mind commend itself to Mrs. Maverick, that she imparted it to Fred—begging him to keep his eyes open, in case anything was to be attempted.

"As for your sister," she added very significantly, "I don't know what Mr. Fleming may have said to her about Noel, but there's no doubt she's very much softened—I was particular struck by her manner to Mr. Fleming this afternoon."

"Well, I fancy, he's got me to thank for that," said Fred, in a lower voice than usual, lest Ally should hear—although she was not in the room at the moment. "She provoked me into telling her what I thought of her t'other night—I will say for her she took it very well—and I think it made some impression upon her."

CHAPTER LXII.

VALLEY FORGE.

With loud peals of laughter your sides, sirs, would crack,
 To see General Convict and Colonel Shoeblack,
 With their hunting-shirts and rifle-guns.

* * * * *
 See cobblers and quacks, rebel priests, and the like,
 Pettifoggers and barbers, with sword and with pike,
 All strutting the Standard of Satan beside,
 And honest names using their black deeds to hide,
 With their hunting-shirts and rifle-guns.—THE REBELS.

It is necessary to return to the events which immediately succeeded Sir John Burgoyne's defeat at Saratoga.

As Jasper had told Althea, Noel had been with him in the camp at Valley Forge during a considerable part of the winter which was so merry for the King's friends in Philadelphia, and so much the reverse for the rebels outside.

Captain Digby's anxious inquiries after his friend had been by no means superfluous. Noel felt the effects of his blow (mitigated as it was) for many days, but, except some weakness from loss of blood, had nearly recovered before the Convention of Saratoga was signed.

General Arnold was carried to Albany a day or two after the Second Battle of Bemis' Heights, and here Noel found him, when the army moved thither immediately after Sir John Burgoyne's surrender. Arnold's wound was even more serious than had been supposed at first, and made him excessively fretful and impatient. He received Noel with his usual kindness; but Surgeon Thacher confided to him that the General had nearly driven him wild, when he sat up of nights with him. Besides his physical sufferings, he was justly indignant at the distinctions showered upon Gates, in whose honour Congress had ordered a medal to be struck—while he himself had not been so much as mentioned in the despatches.

Towards the end of October, Major Hamilton came to Albany, and from him Noel had a full account of the Battle of Germantown, and learned for the first time that his brother had been wounded there. He soon after received a letter from Jasper himself, who was then at Lancaster, whither Mrs. Braxholm had gone before Philadelphia was occupied.

General Gates was soon ordered to recover the forts on the Hudson, and the New Year had begun before Noel could get leave of absence. By that time, Arnold had received through His Excellency the long-delayed commission, which was to give him his proper precedence. The General showed it to Noel, when the latter went to bid him farewell.

"Having made Conway a Major-General, they could scarce withhold from me this tardy justice," he said. "Schuyler has just had a letter, which says the cabal has burst like a bubble, and everybody eating his words as fast as he can swallow 'em down."

"I'm sure, sir," returned Noel, "our army is loyal to His Excellency, and will never listen to these snakes-in-the-grass—any more than 'twill ever forget who they were that really beat General Burgoyne."

"As soon as these cursed dolts of surgeons patch me up, I shall go to New Haven," observed the General. "A prophet, 'tis said, hath no honour in his own country; yet I think I have some friends there, besides my sister, good soul, and my children—who may learn from their father's experience the vanity of expecting justice in this world."

"You will be done justice to hereafter, sir—time tries all," says Noel. "His Excellency bids fair to vanquish all his enemies by simply continuing in his own course, and so will you. I trust, sir, to fight under you yet, where there shall be none to rob you of your credit."

"I must first heal me of my wounds," says the General, with a groan. "I believe I know more surgery than these ignor-amuses who come and shake their wise heads over me. Can you believe, Branzholm, that I ever drove pills at New Haven? Well, you shall hear of me as soon as I am able to stir."

Noel went at once to Valley Forge, being charged with a letter from General Arnold to His Excellency. The country was under snow, all the way from Albany. At every tavern he stopped at, Noel was closely questioned for news; and when his questioners found that he was an officer of General Gates's army, the whole village usually assembled to hear all he had to say about Sir John Burgoyne's defeat, and the Convention of Saratoga; and he took care, in telling his story, to do justice to the share which General Arnold had in those famous events.

It was somewhat after noon, on a gray and bleak February day, that Noel reached the outposts at the foot of the valley—

having narrowly escaped capture by one of those bands of armed loyalists which scoured the neighbourhood of Philadelphia. He presented his pass, and, inquiring the way to headquarters, learned that His Excellency was at Pott's House, down by the Old Forge. He had nearly got there, when he met an officer, so muffled up in his cloak that Noel had nearly passed him, being intent on leading his tired horse over some very bad ground.

"Why, Noel, boy, do you pass by your old father?" cries the officer, letting the cloak fall from his face, and displaying to the shrill south-easter the features of General Branzholm.

"Your mother's here," said the General, when they had done embracing each other. "'Twas none of my doings; but she said if Mrs. Washington could endure it, she could. So when Jasper joined his regiment—which he did as soon as ever the surgeons would hear of it—she came, and Mary with her—and here they've been ever since, never grumbling at anything, though they've been half-froze, and more than half-starved! There's women for you, sir, if you like! There's devotion!"

"My mother, sir, minds nothing but being parted from you," said Noel, in answer to this eulogy.

"That's true enough, boy—though I vow it makes me ashamed I aint more worthy of it," cried the General. "Whatever you do, Noel, my boy, get a wife as loves you. How I pity poor devils whose wives don't care about 'em! Well, we're all in a log-house a mile or so up the valley, next to General Greene's quarters—all but Jasper—he's quartered a little higher up still. You've heard, I suppose, how infamously His Excellency has been served?"

"I've heard, sir, of the hardships the army has suffered."

"Left without rations or blankets," cried the General, "while those infernal pettifoggers at York Town badger him to recover Philadelphia! Thanks to Mr. Lawrence Fleming, my brigade and Jasper's regiment aint absolutely naked. The old gentleman set off for Lancaster as soon as he heard Jasper was wounded, and he's done a deal for us. But we've been sacrificed to a parcel of plotters, who only care to plant their own creatures in the posts of honour. Had His Excellency been properly supported, Philadelphia had never been lost. You'll find Jasper every bit as enraged at it as I am—he's every inch a soldier, if he is a merchant's son, and brought up a lawyer too—he has no more patience than I have with those rascally scribblers! D—— 'em!"

General Branzholm had turned, and was walking beside his son. When they reached headquarters, His Excellency, being much engaged, merely received the letters which Noel had to deliver to him, and desired him to wait upon him next day, as there were many things he wished to hear from an officer so lately come from the Northern army.

Being thus quickly released from attendance, Noel retired, and found his father waiting for him. As they plodded along over the crackling snow, every now and then passing a ghostly sentinel, the landscape became wilder at every step, but trees, rocks, and steep hillsides were all wrapped in one snowy winding-sheet, and the fresh-falling flakes which the wind drove up behind them were as fine as dust.

"I wish we'd got Congress here!" says the General, breasting the hill gallantly. "I only wish I could see 'em all packed into a log-hut, and obliged to sit up all night round their fire for want of a blanket to cover 'em! And no shoes! Let 'em sit there and write their remonstrances! Faugh!"

Having sworn considerably, the General declared he felt better than he had done this long while, and was beginning to tell Noel that Mrs. Greene had made her house into a hospital for the sick and frost-bitten men, and that Mrs. Branzholm and Mary were always in and out, looking after the poor fellows—when a sharp turn by a projecting rock brought them to his quarters.

"Who's this, Myra?" cries the General, pushing Noel before him into the room on the right of the door. But Mrs. Branzholm was not there—it was Mary who cried, "Noel!" and whom Noel caught in his arms, and kissed so heartily. Mary turned very pale, and cried a little—it was, she said, only the suddenness—and then she flushed up a beautiful colour, and said it was because she was so glad.

The next minute, Mrs. Branzholm herself came running in, letting the great camlet cloak she was wrapt in fall to the ground in her eagerness.

"Where is he? where is he?" she cried; "I heard at General Greene's quarters that he was come! Oh, my darling boy——"

She passionately embraced him, and called him her brave Noel, her young hero—asked him if he had expected to find her there—and finally burst into tears, and wept upon his breast.

"She has had a cruel hard time of it, I promise you, Noel," says the General, the tears running down his own cheeks without disguise. "Let her cry, 'tis only joy."

"Yes," she sobbed, "joy at receiving him safe and sound—but he's no prodigal!"

"Nor will his elder brother grudge him his welcome," said Mary, who had not yet recovered her own equanimity.

"Why, where is Jasper?" cries Noel, looking round.

"He aint far off. I've sent up to his quarters," says General Branzholm. "Mary, if there was anything to sit upon, I daresay the boy would as lief sit as stand. I doubt he's had better quarters in Albany, but we can muster up a chair or two—and there's the settle, where we can sit all of a row. We reckon ourselves in clover, I can tell you, Noel, to have a house over our heads at all."

As he spoke, General Branzholm threw some more logs on the fire—it was burning on a large open hearth, and its glow filled every corner of the low irregularly-shaped room. The window was so frozen, that the snow outside could only be distinguished by its chilly glimmer.

"'Tis very cold to be sure—but, after all, what is it to our first winter? If you had seen us as we marched to Quebec——"

Noel was indulging in this little piece of braggadocio, when they heard the sentinel give the challenge.

"'Tis Jasper!" cries Noel, running out into the passage. The meeting between the brothers was extremely tender, and when they came in, it was easy to see that they had both been greatly moved. As Noel's eyes fell on Jasper's mutilated arm, the love and admiration he had always felt for him increased to a sort of veneration—all the more that Jasper took his misfortune so gallantly. He had, indeed, never seemed in gayer spirits, and Mary looked at him in wonder, and began to ask herself if she had been mistaken in her suspicions. Mrs. Branzholm's content was troubled by none of these misgivings—though she, too, had perceived what she called "a dulness" in Jasper ever since his captivity in Boston. She sat between her sons, holding a hand of each, every now and then exclaiming that she had never hoped for such happiness as this again; and listening eagerly to Noel's now oft-told tale. He had, he declared, told it so often by the way that he had learned it by heart—but if so, his descriptions were none the less lively.

As for General Branzholm, he was much too excited to sit down. He walked about the room—now striking into Noel's narrative with some question, now beginning to tell his own tale—but always instantly breaking off to declare that Noel should finish his first.

"Go on, boy, go on!" cries the General. "What a satisfaction 'tis, to be sure, for us to be all together again!"

It was not until the General was called away, that Noel was permitted to satisfy his own curiosity. He had of course much to hear of the loss of Philadelphia, and of the unlucky issue of the admirably-contrived surprise of Germantown, which,—had the first advantage been immediately followed up—would almost certainly have resulted in as great a victory as that of Saratoga.

"I can forgive Noel for believing his General is more fortunate than mine," observed Jasper, when he had told how, in spite of a stubborn resistance, the British light-infantry was in full retreat along the street of Germantown, when Colonel Mulgrave threw himself into Justice Chew's house, and opened fire from the roof and upper windows. How by this delay, time and ammunition were wasted, and meanwhile the reinforcements under Cornwallis came hurrying up from the city. "I can forgive Noel for thinking his General the luckier," continued Jasper; "but the plan was most skilfully laid; and if His Excellency's orders had been followed out, even the mistake of stopping at Chew's would not have lost us the day. But when one General comes up near an hour late, and another disobeys the order to reserve his ammunition, and another is too drunk to obey orders at all, 'tis no wonder we were repulsed. It can scarce be called a defeat—there was no pursuit, and we only lost one gun, and I hear the British Generals have had us in much greater respect ever since."

"He does not say," said his mother, interrupting him, "that 'twas he, with a score or two he had rallied, that made a stand, and so gained time to get the artillery off—and even after he was wounded would not try to save himself till he saw it was safe, and was nearly made prisoner——"

"Dear mother, let us admit that I covered myself with glory," said Jasper, who was always uneasy when his own deeds were being talked about. "I'll tell you another time, Noel, how my brave fellows rescued me, and brought me off the field. But now let us hear more of your exploits; this is the first

time, I think, that a British army ever surrendered, and we cannot hear too much about it."

* * * * *
Noel was several times at headquarters, soon after his arrival in camp, and had an opportunity of speaking his mind there pretty plainly. Going to wait upon His Excellency one evening, whom does he find there but Wilkinson, who insists upon pouring his wrongs into Major Branhholm's unwilling ear, and by way of preface begs to be addressed as simply "Colonel"—having, he says, resigned his brigadiership, on hearing that forty-seven Colonels have remonstrated at his being promoted over their heads.

But it is the perfidy of General Gates which chiefly excites Colonel Wilkinson's eloquence. The Colonel was, it appears, on his way to York Town (there to enter on his duties as Secretary to the new Board of War), when he heard at Lancaster that General Gates had been publicly denouncing him as a liar and traitor. "Try to imagine, if you can,—but I defy you to do it,—my amazement at this incomprehensible enmity, broke out on a sudden and unprovoked on the part of one I have been accustomed to look on as a father!" says the injured Wilkinson, appealing to Major Branhholm—who, not knowing very well what to say (being acquainted with the other side of the story), discreetly holds his tongue, and lets Wilkinson run on.

Wilkinson goes on to tell how he hereupon wrote to General Gates, that, in consideration of the disparity of years and rank between them and of their former connection, he would descend to ask an explanation; and how the General replied by a letter which made matters worse than ever—the fact being that in it Gates distinctly charged him with having himself betrayed the secret, and then tried to fix the blame on Colonel Troup.

Finding remonstrance thrown away, Wilkinson hastened on to York Town, and sent the General a challenge. They were to meet behind the English church, at eight in the morning, and fight with pistols. A little before eight next morning, accordingly, Wilkinson and his second are sallying forth, when Colonel Stoddart comes to say that General Gates is outside, and wants to speak with Colonel Wilkinson!

Gentlemen about to give each other a hostile meeting do not usually confer together at the last moment; but what can Wilkinson do? There is the General waiting outside, alone and unarmed! So Wilkinson steps out.

"'Tis impossible, my dear Major Branzholm, to describe my emotions on seeing him," continues Wilkinson. "He received me with tenderness—an odd word, I admit," for Major Branzholm had smiled—"but also with a manifest embarrassment, and asked me to walk. We turned into a back street, and was both of us silent till we had got beyond the houses. Then he bursts into tears, takes me by the hand, and asks how I could ever think he wished to injure me? I confess I was too affected to find an answer—and before I could speak, he went on to exclaim, '*I injure you! 'tis impossible!* As soon should I think of injuring my own child!' What could I do, my dear Major, but embrace him?" asks Wilkinson, much affected at his own recital.

All's well that ends well; and for General Gates, who by this timely shower effectually damped Colonel Wilkinson's powder, the affair may be said to have ended as well as could be wished. But Wilkinson had less reason to congratulate himself. Once well out of pistol-shot, the General changed his tone, and so unequivocally gave Wilkinson the cold shoulder at the Board, that after a very few days he requested leave of absence. Arrived at Valley Forge, he sought an interview with His Excellency.

"And what I've now learned of General Gates's falsehood and treachery makes it impossible I can ever serve under him again," says Gates's ex-mentor, philosopher, and friend, "and I shall say so in so many words. I could not have believed such duplicity possible! And after all I've done for him! Between you and me, Major Branzholm, if it hadn't have been for me, he would never have come off with so much credit at the Convention. He would have lowered his dignity at every step he took, if I'd not preserved him. He was going to receive Major Kingston without an intermediary! 'Twas I that took care of our dignity all through that affair—and now I am used with the blackest ingratitude, made the scape-goat for everybody's offences, and refused satisfaction on all hands!"

"Then has Lord Stirling refused to fight you?" asks Noel, who knows perfectly well what his lordship has done, but cannot resist the temptation to draw Wilkinson out.

"I—weakly, I fear—allowed myself to be persuaded only to demand from him an acknowledgment that the words was spoke during a convivial hour," replies Wilkinson, a little crest-fallen. "And, after all, what satisfaction would it give me to

shoot Stirling? 'Tis General Gates who is the real culprit, and I ought to put a bullet into him, if I do into anybody."

"I wonder you didn't, when you was in so fair a way to do it," observes Noel, who has been asking himself for some minutes whether loyalty to General Arnold does not demand that he shall himself pick a quarrel with Wilkinson, and have him out?

"What can you do, when a man old enough to be your father bursts into tears—a man, too, that you've looked up to as to a father?" asks Wilkinson piteously.

"From all you've said—and I've seen," says Noel, leaning carelessly against the door-post (for all this conversation has passed just outside headquarters), "I thought 'twas the other way, and that you was rather by way of being a father to General Gates."

"You may well say so, my dear Major!" cries Wilkinson, flattered by this intended sneer. "When I think of all I did for him, I ask myself, was there ever such treachery and ingratitude seen before?"

"His Excellency will see Major Branhholm," said one of the aides, putting his head out; and by the time Noel was dismissed, Wilkinson was gone—so General Arnold's wrongs went unavenged.

CHAPTER LXIII.

IN WHICH NOEL TRIES TO MAKE OUT A MAP OF THE COUNTRY.

NOEL remained at Valley Forge, nominally attached to his father's staff. A pretty constant communication with Philadelphia was kept up, by means of spies, and full reports reached the camp of the manner in which the British army was beguiling the tedium of the winter. As the spring came on, and many successful raids for cattle were made, the condition of the army considerably improved, and the hopes of a French alliance raised every one's spirits—every one's, that is, except Jasper's. The more Noel thought about the matter, the more convinced he became that Jasper had something on his mind. Jasper's spirits had never been as demonstrative as his own, but there had always hitherto been a quiet genial cheerfulness about him, a wholesome disposition to make the best of things—and, above all, a keen sense of humour. In his gravest moments he had always been ready with some quaint or witty allusion. But

now, if he jested at all, his jests had a bitter flavour about them ; and his whole manner—or so Noel fancied—was that of a man who has ceased to expect that any good shall ever happen to him any more.

Yet Jasper was universally beloved and honoured. He had brought his regiment to a high state of discipline and efficiency ; and owing to his presence and exertions—when scarcely convalescent—he had got their wants better supplied than those of almost any other regiment in camp. It was known that he and his uncle, Mr. Lawrence Fleming, had pledged their credit for the so much needed supplies of blankets and clothing, which had at last come in. It was said that His Excellency (who was known to place great confidence in Colonel Fleming) had offered him the command of the Life-Guard—a body specially attached to the person of the Commander-in-Chief—but the Colonel had, with His Excellency's full approval, declined this honour, on the ground that he believed he could be more useful as an officer of artillery.

Jasper had fallen into a melancholy—Noel was sure of it. A dozen times at least, when he was on the point of bringing up the old subject, and discussing with him the chances of his ever meeting Miss Digby again, and of how she would be likely to receive him in that much-desired event—a dozen times at least had Noel hesitated, and finally left the words unsaid, as he looked at Jasper. He took to watching his brother, and saw that he often fell into fits of absence and silence. Casting about for what the cause could be, he had at last believed he had hit upon it, and he resolved to speak at the first opportunity.

It happened one afternoon that Jasper came down to his stepfather's quarters, and found Noel alone, and busy writing. Noel had, he said, all but finished his letter (which was to General Arnold, and was to go by an unexpected opportunity), and he begged his brother to excuse him for a few moments.

As Noel wrote, he glanced from time to time at Jasper, who was looking out of the window—whence, however, there was nothing to see but a rocky bank. As he stood there motionless, apparently studying this not very cheerful prospect, something in his attitude smote so painfully on Noel's heart that his eyes grew dim. On the impulse of the moment, he started up, and, going over to the window, put one arm round his brother's neck, and taking his hand with the other, said very earnestly—trying to look in Jasper's face,—

"Dear brother, what is it has changed you so? Nay, don't deny it, you are changed—you are grown so grave I scarce know you."

Jasper had made a slight movement as though he would escape from his brother's loving grasp, but Noel would not let him go.

"'Tis your fancy, dear boy," he said, finding himself fairly taken prisoner. "Or if I'm changed, 'tis only that I'm grown older, I suppose."

"We are both older," returned Noel, "and we have both of us had enough to make us sadder—yet nothing, I think, that should bring into your eyes the look I've often seen there of late. 'Tis a look as though—as though all was over with you. I've remarked it this long while, but had a delicacy in intruding on your confidence. But I can bear it no longer. There's a something, I'm convinced—our mother has observed it, and Mary——"

"Upon my word, 'tis rather embarrassing to be the object of such close inspection," exclaimed Jasper, flushing painfully. "I've a particular dislike to being watched——"

"Do you think those that love you can help watching you?" said Noel, determined to pursue the advantage he thought he had obtained. "You think you've hid this trouble at the bottom of your heart, dear brother, but we all see you aint yourself. There's something on your mind—some foolish idea, perhaps, which the mere putting into words would take half the sting from. Nay, Jasper," he insisted, as Jasper shook his head, "talking of a thing will often ease one's heart, and sometimes heal it. You cannot look me in the face, and tell me there's nothing troubles you."

Jasper did for one moment look at his brother—who had never relaxed his grip—but his eyes fell under Noel's as he said uneasily, with an attempt at an indifference which he evidently did not feel,—"'Tis true, dear Noel, I have for some time past felt a lowness of spirits—but 'twill pass, I doubt not. Do they not say some men are troubled with melancholy, in the spring of the year?"

"'Tis not that," said Noel, looking anxiously at his brother's averted face, and drawing him closer still; "the mischief lies deeper, I'm convinced—and if 'tis anything it would ease your mind to speak of freely——"

"Nay, dear brother," returned Jasper, still more uneasily,

and turning his face further away, "the thing that troubles me cannot be mended by talking about it. Time, they say, is the surest panacea for most ills. I'm an unconscionable long while getting used to mine——"

"Then I'm right in my suspicion!" cried Noel, still trying to see his brother's face. "'Tis as I feared, and you are letting the loss of your arm prey upon your mind—some foolish fancy that you're disabled by it, I don't doubt, hath gotten possession of you——"

Jasper, who had for a moment changed countenance, recovered himself completely as Noel said this, and, interrupting him here, said, frankly meeting his eyes and smiling for the first time during the conversation,—

"My dear brother, if that were my only cause for uneasiness, I promise you I would be as cheerful as even you could desire me. 'Tis an inconvenience, of course; but I suppose we did not embark in this cause without counting the cost. But I confess there's something that troubles me—sometimes; but 'tis something that touches me much more nearly—I mean," he said as if correcting himself, "that while I was laid up, I had the more time for thinking of what can only be helped by forgetting it. Let's not speak of it."

"If you'll only speak and confide in me, there might be some help for it. Let me try to guess it, brother"—urged Noel, forcibly detaining Jasper's hand.

"No, no!" cried Jasper, turning pale. "I can tell no human ear, not even yours! 'Tis one of those things that words may make worse, but can never make better. I do not mean that there's any disgrace in it," he added hastily. "'Tis only irremediable."

He wrung his brother's hand, and threw himself into a chair. Noel looked at him anxiously.

"You have broke out all of a sweat," he said, touching Jasper's brow. "Tell me, at least—are you ill?"

"I am well enough in body," replied Jasper, summoning up a smile, as his brother stood watching him with a very puzzled and distressed expression; "and my mind is imbued with more philosophy than you, by your suspicion, gave me credit for."

"Philosophy is all very well; but I'd give all I have, to hear you make one of those sly jests you used to be so fond of," says Noel, still looking at him with tender uneasiness. "We used to be always laughing when we was together;

'tis always happiness to be with you, but you're grown so quiet——"

"Nay, call me a dull fellow at once, dear Noel," said Jasper, with a touch of that old humour which Noel had just been regretting. "But I'll throw it off, I promise you, I will! indeed, I believe the worst is over. Since you've come, I have felt much lighter in my spirits. I'm haunted by a spectre, which your mere presence hath power to charm away. And you must own that these are not precisely times for jesting. You might almost as well say that I have ceased to love books, because I've not brought my library into camp with me. You must make some allowance for me——" Here Jasper looked quite himself again, and his eyes brightened with affectionate pride as they rested on his brother's face. "You come here, flushed with victory and covered with glory, and wonder that we poor fellows, who are only covered with wounds and frost-bites, are not in such high feather as yourself——"

"How I wish we had had you with us!" cried Noel. "You should have seen some fighting——"

"I have enjoyed that privilege to a greater extent than you seem to be aware of," returned Jasper drily, smiling a little at his brother's ardour. "I have been in more battles than you, my dear boy—I was counting 'em up t'other day. And if you have carried off the greater share of the glory, you must at least admit I have the advantage of you in honourable scars."

"Now you speak more like yourself!" cried Noel. "But I trust, dear brother, I've never seemed to triumph unduly? We've been more fortunate of late in the north, but not more heroic. I'm not so childish, I hope, as to be dazzled by victory. And as for you—but you can never know, Jasper, the half of what I feel for you!"

Noel's voice faltered and the tears came into his eyes.

This display of affection touched Jasper's heart with inexpressible consolation, and with pain as inexpressible. "But the worst is over," he thought. "I can never again be in so cruel a strait as when I was in Boston. Dearest brother," he said aloud, taking Noel's hand, as he stood beside him, "you think too much of me. I'm not that paragon of wisdom you take me for. I was never so far gone as to imagine myself very much wiser than the rest of mankind, but I did, I own, somewhat plume myself on my resolution. Now, could I but resolve to think

no more of a certain thing which troubles me, 'twould vanish like the hollow phantom it is—but for the life of me I can't ! I will try, though,—'tis possible that pain and weakness have enfeebled my will for a time. Trust me, I'll lay the ghost yet !”

Jasper was very pale, but he spoke cheerfully—and presently changed the conversation to the business he had come upon. But long after he had gone, Noel was haunted by a look he had seen in his brother's face ; it had puzzled him—it was so full of affection, yet mingled with something else which he could not read.

“'Twas as though I had grieved him,” he thought. “But that's impossible—I love him too much, and he knows it. He owned it touched him very nearly—when he said that, I think he was near betraying himself. Can he be in love with Mary, and she have refused him ? He was mightily put out, when I said she had observed the change in him. Or hath he, perhaps, some unhappy passion for a married woman—inno-cent, of course, but that hath destroyed his peace of mind ? But no ! Jasper is incapable of a lawless love ; if he loved, 'twould be in the high road of honour, I'll stake my life on that ! And I've never seen any sign in him, that any one woman was more to him than another. Whatever he may say, I believe he had better have made a clean breast of it to me !”

Whether Jasper succeeded in laying the ghost, or for whatever reason, he appeared much more cheerful after this conversation, and Noel was confirmed in his belief in the comfort which is to be found in the speaking of one's griefs—even this bare admission of a secret trouble having evidently eased Jasper's mind.

When, however, in May (a little after the rejoicings on account of the French treaties), His Excellency made choice of Jasper to go to Philadelphia about the Convention troops, Noel came as near as he ever had done in his life to thinking his brother could be unreasonably prejudiced.

Noel had learned from Captain Graydon of the “Greens” (who had it from some of his people), that Miss Digby was undoubtedly in Philadelphia. Jasper was to set out early on Monday evening. General Washington knew by his spies that this was the very day fixed for the Festival in honour of Sir William Howe, but there were reasons for not delaying for even another day. On Sunday afternoon, Noel presented himself at his brother's quarters, and, having previously ascertained from

Telemachus that his master was alone, walked in, unannounced, to the humble room, which the officers of Jasper's regiment thought themselves very lucky to share.

Jasper was diligently studying a map spread out on the deal table which occupied the centre of the room, and now and then making a note in his pocket-book, of some by-road or cross-cut.

"I was coming down presently," he said, as Noel entered. "Can you make out that road by Hallibut's? the map is blotted just there."

Noel looked at the spot to which Jasper was pointing, and proposed to try and gently scratch off some of the ink, in the hope of tracing the road. While he was engaged in this, and Jasper was looking over his notes, Noel said, with an unsuccessful effort to conceal how much it cost him to speak,—

"I—I came up hoping to catch you alone. I—I want you to take a message for me to Miss Digby."

Now although Miss Digby's name had been but seldom mentioned between them, owing to the curious dislike which Jasper evidently had to discuss the subject, he was aware that she was in Philadelphia—Noel having repeated to him what Graydon had said—and he might have been prepared for what was coming—perhaps he was, for he only kept his eyes bent upon his notes, and said, "Well?"

"You know, brother, what I feel for her," continued Noel, in his agitation poking his penknife clean through His Excellency's map.

"For God's sake, take care what you're doing!" cried Jasper sharply. "Give me the penknife—I'll be bound to be less clumsy than you seem to be to-day!"

Noel was so astonished at this extraordinary snappishness on Jasper's part, that he meekly surrendered his penknife, and watched his brother patiently scraping away, until he could make out the blotted road sufficiently for his purpose. If Jasper wished to prove to himself that his hand was steady, he succeeded.

"I shall only make another hole if I do any more," he observed in his usual tone, as he shut up the knife and returned it to his brother. "I must tell His Excellency 'twas my own awkwardness made that one. Yes, 'tis as I thought—the road turns off at the second wood. Well, what is the message that I am to take?"

"I know not what to send; there's a thousand things I

could say——” began Noel, his embarrassment vanished, now that he had broken the ice.

“I can scarce remember so many, even if I could be sure of the time to repeat them,” said Jasper lightly, and wondering if men felt like this on the rack.

“Well—say to her that I’ve thought of her so often, that if she has thought of me but half as much, I am content! And oh, Jasper, for God’s sake, find out if there’s any hope for me! I think if there was not, I could bear it like a man. Most likely, she’s engaged before now to marry some British officer or other, who’d make nothing of calling me a rebel to my face,” he added dismally; “and I think if I knew it, I could reconcile myself—no, not that! but I think I could bear it more easily than I can this suspense. So, dear Jasper, try to sound her. Oh, what a pity ’twas you did not understand her better, so as she might be more likely to open her mind to you—that is, if a woman ever does open her mind. You never saw her as she was in England, Jasper—she was all kindness, all good-nature—with just a dash of pride, to keep one on one’s best behaviour with her. I think, if you’d seen her then, you’d almost have loved her yourself.”

Jasper did not answer. He had turned his back upon his brother, and was apparently arranging two or three books which lay in the window-sill.

“I’ll do my best,” he said presently, speaking very abruptly; “but I ought to tell you that I do not like the task. A man should plead his own cause. She may resent my interference——”

“Not if you tell her ’tis a matter of life and death to me to know the truth!” cried Noel. “If you did but know how to appeal to it, there’s a womanly heart beneath all her pride, that will make her listen kindly, whatever her answer may be. Mary believes she has an inclination for some one—it must be some one she knew in England, for Mary’s opinion is built on some words she once let fall at Oglethorpe. I can tell you, brother, Mary thinks as highly of Miss Digby as I do myself. You can’t think the load ’tis off my heart, that you’ve undertook the errand for me!”

Having thus tortured Jasper to the extreme verge of his endurance, Noel saw him depart next afternoon, and, an hour or two afterwards, was himself hastily summoned to headquarters, and ordered to go at once to New Haven—where General Arnold

had been since the first of the month—and take orders from that General for the raising of levies in Connecticut.

Before he went, Noel confided to Mary that Jasper had promised to see Althea, and endeavour to sound her.

"'Tis more than I could ever do," he said. "One way or another, she never would let me come to the point with her. Well, if she prefers some pink-faced British Major or Colonel to me, I'd sooner know it. I've fancied sometimes, Mary, you knew more than you would own——"

"I know nothing! nothing!" cried Mary, with flaming cheeks. "If ever I had a suspicion, 'twas but the merest fancy—quite dispelled afterwards. You are too quick, Noel. I can truly say I'm as much in the dark as to her real inclinations, as you are yourself. I wish 'twas ended, I'm sure, one way or another!"

Mary uttered this wish rather peevishly; and Noel had the grace to feel ashamed of himself, as he remembered how unconscionably he had availed himself of her sympathetic ear, and how terribly he would miss her away in Connecticut.

It thus came to pass that about the time that Captain Montresor was displaying his figure of Fame, Noel, tossing on an uneasy bed in a wayside inn, was trying to imagine how Jasper would deliver his message, and how Althea would receive it. He had conjured up a dozen different scenes, before Jasper and Althea went out together in the summer-night into the garden at Walnut-Grove.

CHAPTER LXIV.

HALLIBUT'S.

AFTER Fred had left him, Jasper's spirits underwent a great revulsion. What, he asked himself, should he say to his brother? He could but protest his innocence; and what if Noel should refuse to believe him?

As he thought of it, it almost seemed to Jasper that he was a villain, who had supplanted his own brother.

"Yet, my God! what else could I have done?" he said to himself, appealing from his own morbid self-reproaches. "I pleaded his cause sincerely, God knows! If I could have secured his happiness at the price of my own, I would have done it. But how shall I face him? How shall I begin to tell him?"

As Jasper rode along, sunk in these dark thoughts, his heart grew heavier and heavier, until Telemachus, a little way behind, noticed his dejected attitude, and sagaciously put it down to melancholy at parting with Miss Digby.

But this mood was only the first shrinking of a just and affectionate soul from a happiness which seemed to be obtained at the expense of another. Jasper's understanding of duty was too manly for him not to perceive that he had no right to reject Althea's love, because his brother had loved her too. He had not sought that love—he had almost sought her hatred, so fearful had he been of wronging his brother.

"'Tis a problem almost too hard for me to solve," he thought; "my stake in it is too great. I dare not trust my own judgment where I am to gain so much by it. It must be left to time—perhaps to death, which may come now that I have ceased to desire it."

Having ingeniously tortured himself with these considerations, Jasper began to wonder what Althea had written to Noel, and whether she had vouchsafed a word to himself. There was something in the packet—he had felt it as he took it from Althea's hand. They were riding along a level piece of road, with a thick undergrowth on either side, beyond which were woods quite shutting out the view. Jasper hung the reins over the holster of his saddle, and took Althea's letter from his breast. As she had said, it was not sealed, but it was so securely tied up, that he reluctantly put it away again until he could open it more conveniently—and, glancing back to see how far Telemachus was behind, desired him to come on faster.

"Where are my spurs?" he asked, observing that he was without them.

"Sho you not want no spurs, Mas'r Jasper—dat ar hoss he go quite quick 'nuff, any time. I take dem off, 'cos you so careless," said Telemachus, jogging up alongside. Ever since his master had lost his arm, Telemachus had constituted himself his guardian to an extent which sometimes tried sorely Jasper's patience.

"Put them on at once," he said, in the tone which Telemachus always obeyed. "At this pace we shall not reach camp to-night; and I mean to take an early supper at Hallibut's, and go on in the cool of the evening."

And in spite of Telemachus's highly-coloured picture of what would happen, if "dat ar cantank'rous bison" (as he designated

Jasper's powerful but perfectly good-tempered chestnut) once got the bit between his teeth, he was compelled to produce the spurs from his coat-tail pocket—which might almost have been Fortunatus's purse, from the astonishing number and variety of the objects stowed away in it.

"Dar, Mas'r Jasper, I on'y hope you not 'pent," observed Telemachus, as he remounted. "Supper, indeed!" he muttered to his horse, the first time he found himself far enough behind his master to indulge in soliloquy—"Dis nigger know better'n dat. Time to read dat ar letter—dat what *he* mean by supper. Tink I not know he roamin' 'bout de garding las' night, wid Miss Althea, jes' 's hard's ever dey could go, for hours an' hours? Pretty sort o' supper dere is to Hallibut's!"

With a snort of unutterable scorn, Telemachus urged his own nag after his master, who was riding towards the refreshment in question at a sharp trot, which Telemachus considered much too fast for bodily comfort.

"Hallibut's" stood in the midst of a desolate tract of country—desolate, that is, as regarded human habitation—but so shut in on all sides by wood, that it might have been the very ugly nest of some bird which builds on the ground. A board nailed to a tree, some hundred yards down the road, announced, in letters which rose one above another like children on a Jacobean monument, that entertainment was to be found here. One or two young men were lounging about the door. They eyed Colonel Fleming and his attendant in an ominously professional manner, which suggested the uncharitable idea that these half-military, half-pastoral youths might occasionally vary the monotony of agricultural life with a little highwaying. They presently, however, evinced so lively an interest in the patriotic cause, that it might reasonably be hoped they confined their operations to the enemies of their country.

The landlord was an old man, with a quick, nervous manner. He was much bowed with age, and had a habit of turning his back on the person he was addressing. Standing thus, resting the palms of his hands upon his knees, and looking over his shoulder, he always appeared to be in the very act of leaving his auditor; and if rumour spoke truly as to his antecedents, he had doubtless often found it convenient to assume an attitude so unfavourable to prolonged conversation. His maxim evidently was to ask as many and answer as few questions as possible. A note of interrogation put him to flight, and he did not like

people with too good memories. It was said that many a bale of tobacco and keg of brandy had been smuggled up and down the Delaware, under the paternal care of Old Hallibut; and there were some darker stories of missing pedlars and traders—which, however, happened so long ago, that no one in the neighbourhood could ever be got to acknowledge there was any truth in them.

"Yes; I reckon you can, Colonel," said this dubious host, in answer to Jasper's question whether he could have supper immediately? He shuffled off as he spoke, towards the door of the sanded parlour—in which Jasper had discovered him reconnoitring through the window—but stopped at the threshold, and, taking up his favourite position, looked back at his guest, and asked what his uniform might be?

"I am a Colonel of Artillery," replied Jasper briefly. Old Hallibut made as though this information were a morsel of food to be chewed before swallowing.

"Think there'll be some more fightin' pretty soon down this way?" he asked—apparently when he had disposed of the first answer.

"It's impossible to say—the British won't stop in Philadelphia for ever—and I daresay we shall fire a shot or two at them when they come out," replied Jasper.

Old Hallibut nodded his gray unkempt head. "We know the most o' what goes on," he said mysteriously, turning a little more towards his guest, and removing his right hand from his knee, to rapidly jerk the thumb in the supposed direction of Philadelphia. "There's been a kind o' rejoicin', aint there, down to Philadelph'y? or leastways there is to be, along o' bid-din' good-bye to Gin'ral Howe?"

"Something of the sort," said Jasper.

Old Hallibut's curiosity was so great, that he fairly turned round, and stared at Jasper from head to foot. "Was you there?" he asked.

"I saw something of it."

"But y'aint a Britisher?"

"His Excellency sent me with a message to the British Generals," said Jasper, perceiving that the only way to get rid of the old man was to answer his questions.

"That's so?" said Old Hallibut in a slow meditative tone. "Wa-al, I s'pose it's all right." This remark appeared to refer to the mystery of an American officer's presence at a British

revel. Jasper took his letters from his breast, as a hint that he was occupied.

"Much off the common for grandeur, think?" asked Old Hallibut.

"It was magnificent in its way—sham fights, dancing, fireworks, and all that," answered Jasper, who had drawn a chair to the table, which Old Hallibut calmly watched him do, without offering to assist him, as he observed with irritating deliberation,—

"Fine-dressed ladies, now, I'll swear, in plenty?"

"A good many—and gentlemen too," said Jasper.

"Warn't nothin' as happened to spile their sport, was there now?" inquired Old Hallibut mysteriously.

"I believe an attack was expected early in the night," said Jasper, somewhat surprised at this question, and all his suspicions quickened by it. "I heard this morning that something occurred at one of the outposts, but I believe it was a false alarm; nothing came of it at any rate."

"Ah!" drawled Old Hallibut; "but suth'n *might* ha' come of it and *would* ha' come of it, if some folk could ha' had their way. Seen a good deal o' sarvice?" he asked, with a jerk of his chin towards the Colonel's maimed left arm.

"Pretty well," replied Jasper; and lest his host should require of him a detailed account of his campaigns and wounds, he added in a tone intended to check further conversation,—“I am much pressed for time, and shall be glad to have something to eat as soon as possible. I have a long way to ride to-night, and I shall be obliged if you will send my servant with some ink, and a pen, and some writing-paper.”

"I'll go fetch it myself," said the old man, shuffling off with so obvious an intention of returning, that Jasper added hastily,—

"Don't trouble to do that—I wish to speak to my man."

Telemachus made his appearance in a few minutes, armed with a very dirty sheet of paper, two pens worn almost to the pith, and a battered leaden inkstand—which looked as though it had been used on some sudden emergency as a cannon-ball.

"'Pears like Ole Man Hallibut aint no great describer," observed Telemachus, presenting these weapons to his master—he had a huge admiration for Jasper's penmanship, and a corresponding contempt for persons who could not write. "He aint got no more paper, not a mossul—and dese yer pens has bin

used to ile de locks an' keys with. Seems to me as white folks ought'er be ashamed of themselves, if *dey* can't write," he continued, dusting the inkstand with his fingers; "'taint no matter for a nigger—'taint 'spected of 'em; but ig'rance is right down disgustin' in white folks. But how you goin' to write wid dese yer, Mas'r Jasper, 's more'n I know."

"They will serve for all the writing I shall do," said Jasper. "Be careful how you talk here, Telemachus; say as little as you can about the camp. You may chatter as much as you choose about Philadelphia and the Mischianza."

Jasper might possibly not have given this permission if he had been aware of what Telemachus could say about himself. He answered glibly,—“Yes, Mas'r Jasper. Low sort o' folks here, Mas'r Jasper, mighty low. Ole Man Hallibut he dreffle blackguard; Jack-o'-bofe-sides, *dey do say*."

"Hush! you may be overheard," said Jasper.

"Yes, Mas'r Jasper—dis jus' de berry morrul place for ears ob' walls," observed Telemachus—who thus rendered the proverb which teaches us that walls have ears.

"Fetch me the holster-pistols," continued Jasper; "and then don't let me be disturbed till supper is ready."

"Bress you, Mas'r Jasper, der aint no supper in dis yer ninn," said Telemachus earnestly; "bacon an' eggs is de mos' Ole Man Hallibut can do—an' mighty lucky ef you git any eggs. Der's a gal jus' gone out, fer to hunt around in de bushes an' see fer to find some."

"You had better go and help her," returned Jasper drily, as Telemachus showed no disposition to depart; "but first fetch me the pistols—and mind how you carry them."

Telemachus brought them with great circumspection. Jasper looked carefully to see that they had not been tampered with, and once more desired Telemachus to leave him, and to be very cautious in his talk.

The packet contained two letters, and something wrapped up in several papers, which proved to be an old-fashioned ring which Jasper had often seen Althea wear. It was a large crystal, set with brilliants, and the letters A D done in hair under the crystal. Round the broad shank of the ring was the posy—

This and the Giver Are thine for ever.

He slipped it on his finger before he opened the letters. One of them was addressed to Noel, and the other to Mary. He

read that to Mary first. It contained an account of how they had passed the winter in Philadelphia, and gave some details of the *Mischianza*.

"I took no part in it myself, tho' invited to be one of the ladies," she said. "I have been—never mind why—or ask Col. Fleming if you feel enough curiosity—so dull in my spirits that I have had no inclination for merry-making. Indeed, our revels seemed to me to be no better than a kind of fiddling while Rome was burning."

This was all she said about herself. Jasper refolded the letter, and paused a moment, before he opened the one addressed to Noel. It was not so fairly written as that to Mary, and there were one or two corrections in it. Jasper's eyes were dim before he had read it through.

"MY DEAR KIND BROTHER NOEL," wrote Althea, "You know I always call'd you so, and always said there could be no other relationship between us. Jasper's love to you is so great, that he would never have let me know I had his affections, but that, in the surprise and grief of learning how much he had suffer'd, I betray'd myself. What he is, you know as well as I, and I saw it from the first day I knew him, tho' I show'd I did so chiefly by my unkindness to him. I have us'd him very ill, but have, I truly believe, never given you a just cause to say I've wronged you. Let me know you forgive me, for, however against my will or seeking, giving you any uneasiness. I shall not be happy till I know you are so, and that you believe me, as I trust I've always been, your sincere friend and well-wisher, ALTHEA DIGBY."

In the midst of thinking how it would be when he gave this letter to Noel, Jasper reopened it, to see how his own name looked in Althea's handwriting. She had begun to write "your Brother's," but had carefully crossed out the words, and had written "Jasper's."

Jasper was somewhat disappointed to find that she had written nothing to himself—a reflection which was both ungrateful and unreasonable, as she could not possibly have had anything to say which she had not said already. To be sure, there was the outside wrapper of the packet, with his name upon it—"Col. Fleming"—rather unsteadily written, as though the writer's hand had trembled; and beneath the address of Mary's letter were the words,—"*Kindly fav'd by Col. Fleming;*" but this was all.

Jasper was considering the less agreeable subject of what he should say to Noel, and whether he should write at all, or wait and trust to speech, when he heard a sound of voices outside the window—or rather, as it seemed, round the corner of the house. It was now past seven o'clock, and, the house being

somewhat overshadowed by trees, the light was already beginning to wane.

The first words which caught his ear instantly aroused his attention.

"He'll have a better dinner to-morrow in Philadelph'y, nor what he'll have a supper to-night on Barren Hill," said a voice which sounded like a young man's. "They'll be up with him afore daybreak."

"Think so?" asked another voice. "Think they'll hang him, when they've got him?"

"No, you born fool, you; they won't hang a French Markis," returned the first voice.

Just then, Jasper heard a heavy step and a whisper, and believed that Old Hallibut had gone out to warn them to be quiet—for the talking ceased, and the men moved off. A minute or two after, the door was opened very softly, and Old Hallibut thrust his head in. Seeing his guest busy writing, he observed that supper would be ready in a quarter of an hour, and vanished—but left the door ajar, and was evidently on the watch.

Jasper knew that the Marquess La Fayette was to occupy Barren Hill in a day or two, with the view of being ready to harass the expected British retreat. It was easy to suppose that he had done this a little earlier than had been at first intended, and it was evident that the movement had got wind—while the tone of the speakers sufficiently showed both that the Marquess was in danger, and that he would not hear of his danger from them.

Jasper congratulated himself on having so promptly sent for his pistols. His plan was made in a moment. Fortunately, he had well studied that ill-used map, through which Noel had put his penknife—only the day before yesterday. He must get away without exciting suspicion, and then strike across country, and at all risks, cross the Schuykil, and warn La Fayette that he was to be attacked. There was just time to write a few words to Noel, which he resolved to entrust to Telemachus, together with a note to General Washington. He should thus take the double chance, and, even if he himself failed to reach Barren Hill, La Fayette might be succoured from the camp.

Old Hallibut's paper served for the note to His Excellency—the letter to Noel was written on the sheet in which Althea had wrapped up her ring. There was no time to pick and choose phrases, and Jasper's letter was soon written. He had

scarcely finished and sealed it (which he did with a dirty wafer he found in the table-drawer), when supper was brought in. It consisted, as Telemachus had predicted, of a dish of bacon garnished with eggs, set upon a coarse and not over-clean cloth. The Colonel was assiduously waited upon by the host himself, in spite of a broad hint that his servant could do it very well. The pistols in particular seemed to have a fascination for Old Hallibut—he hovered about them as they lay on the mantel-shelf, until Jasper took the opportunity of his host's momentary absence to place them on the table close beside him.

The moment he had finished supper, which he despatched as speedily as he thought was prudent, Jasper ordered Telemachus to get his, and went out himself to see that the horses had been properly attended to. Remarking that they had come a long way, he ordered an extra feed of corn, and stood by while Old Hallibut held the sieve under their noses. Jasper's horse was fidgety—he pawed constantly with one hoof, and when his master caressed him, he whined uneasily.

"I'll see to feeding them, if you'll go and hurry up my fellow—'tis high time we were off," said Jasper, taking the sieve.

The decisive tone and action had their effect. With a questioning glance at the Colonel, old Hallibut shambled off, and Jasper instantly set the sieve on the ground and lifted up the suspected hoof; it was as he suspected—a sharp stone had been so cunningly inserted, that the poor beast would have infallibly fallen lame before he had gone a quarter of a mile. Jasper had but just ascertained that the other horse was all right, when Telemachus came into the rude shed which served as a stable.

"Hector has been meddled with," said Jasper. "Get that stone out carefully, while I pay the reckoning, and don't leave the horses an instant till I come back."

He had taken the precaution to slip the pistols into his breast, before he left the parlour, and he now stood and called for the reckoning at the inn-door. There was no one about—even the girl of whom Telemachus had spoken had disappeared. Old Hallibut evidently wished to find some pretext for delay, and as evidently was disconcerted by the prompt action of his guest. The horses had been brought out, and Jasper had just mounted, when he heard the click of a casement, and, looking up, saw a sunburnt girl, with hair bleached nearly white by

the sun, looking out from the upper window. She laid her finger on her lips, shook her head vigorously, and pointed in the direction in which the horses' heads were turned. Old Hallibut seemed to have heard the window open, for he ran a step or two out into the road—more nimbly than his wizened legs and shambling gait promised—and glanced up. But the girl had drawn the window to, and disappeared.

"We are well out of that place, Telemachus," said Jasper, when a turn hid from them the bare shed-like inn, and the scarecrow figure of Old Hallibut, still gazing after them from the middle of the road. "The men we saw when we came are thieves of some sort—and, I fancy, are not very particular of what sort. Luckily, I know several short cuts through the wood; but we must press on as fast as we can."

"Dear Lord A'mighty! Mas'r Jasper!" stuttered Telemachus, who was the colour of wood-ashes. "You not mean you tink we been gone fell 'mong cow-boys?"

"Cow-boys or skimmers, it is no great matter which," returned his master; "they are horse-stealers and cattle-stealers—if they are not worse—and they know of an attack that is to be made to-night or to-morrow morning on the Marquess. Listen to what I am going to say. At the cross-roads we must part company, and you must ride as hard as you can to Valley Forge, and give this note, the instant you arrive, into His Excellency's own hand. You can tell him, if he asks you any questions, that I overheard a conversation, and that I am gone to Barren Hill, to put the Marquess on his guard."

Having at great pains impressed all this upon Telemachus, and especially the necessity of haste, Colonel Fleming took the cross-road, and was so fortunate as to ford the Schuykil unobserved. He made such haste, that he would have been in time, even if the surprise-party had not lost its way, and been so long in arriving, that every one had begun to think the alarm had been false.

CHAPTER LXV.

ALTHEA ASTONISHES CAPTAIN DIGBY.

A DAY or two after the mysterious failure of General Grant's attempt to surprise the Marquess La Fayette, Althea, finding herself alone with her brother, informed him that there was

something which she would be glad to tell him, if he would promise to keep the secret. To this Fred replied that horses should not draw it from him, and instantly demanded what it was about?

Althea did not immediately answer—and when she did speak, it was only to observe that she should not so much mind Cousin Maverick's knowing it, if she could trust her not to tell everybody, but that she did not care to be the talk of Philadelphia. Here she broke off abruptly, and, getting up from her chair, went to a little round mirror which hung at the other end of the room, and appeared to be arranging some of her curls.

"What's it about, Ally?" asked Fred, taking his cane (which had a Moor's head for a handle) from the corner close beside him, and fidgeting with it to conceal a great deal of impatience, and a little uneasiness. Who could say what Fleming might have told Ally about Mary?

"Well, *who's* it about, then?" he said, as she did not at once reply. "I swear I won't split." He was feeling rather qualmish—as one does in a high swing when the swing returns.

"It is about—Colonel Fleming—partly," said Althea, who, having arranged her head-dress to her satisfaction, was now standing before the fireplace—her left hand resting on the high mantelshelf, and her right playing nervously with the pin-cushion and scissors which hung on red ribbons from her waist.

"Colonel Fleming!" exclaimed Fred, evidently much disconcerted. "Well—go on!" Here he thrust the Moor's head into his mouth, and became very red in the face before he could get it out again. "For God's sake, Ally, don't stand there, humming and hawing! Cousin Maverick will be coming back soon, and then you can't tell me, you say."

But Althea was doing something to her waistband, and seemed not to hear. Having settled that matter, she reverted to the mantelpiece, at which she stared intently.

"Come to the point, for Heaven's sake, Ally!" cried the unhappy Fred. "I'm particular interested, now I know it's about Fleming."

"But it is about some one else too."

"O Lord! I thought so! Now for it!" thought Fred, gnawing despairingly at the Moor.

"You said the other night that I used to dislike him," continued Althea—addressing the mantelpiece, and leaning her forehead on her crossed hands, so that her face could not be seen—

"and you seemed to fear I might be wanting in—in—the respect he is entitled to." Althea hummed and hawed a good deal before she got this out, but then continued much more briskly,—
"You think you can read women, my dear boy, but you never guessed *my* riddle." She laughed rather nervously as she spoke.

"What, is *that* it?" exclaimed Fred, his countenance suddenly brightening. "Why, my dear girl, I knew all about that before we went to Oglethorpe!"

"Indeed! then you knew it before I knew it myself," said Althea, with a toss of her head.

"That's very likely—lookers-on see most of the game," observed Fred sententiously. "When you used to say Noel was like another brother, I knew very well what it would come to. And of course that explained your dislike to Fleming. As Cousin Maverick said, 'twas not to be expected as there could be any love lost between you, when, but for his persuasions, Noel might never have joined the rebels."

Althea's sense of the ludicrous was so tickled by this, that she laughed immoderately, and could not speak for some minutes—but it was a laugh that came very near to end in crying.

Presently, however, she seemed to make a great effort to throw off her embarrassment. She sat down in Mrs. Maverick's arm-chair, and, looking straight before her, said quietly,—
"I see that what I have to say will be a great surprise to you. I have promised Colonel Fleming that I will marry him as soon as the war is over."

Fred's astonishment was so overwhelming, that for several minutes it prevented his grasping her meaning.

"Colonel Fleming!" he exclaimed, as soon as his bewildered tongue could get hold of an articulate syllable. "COLONEL FLEMING! Good Heavens, Ally! I can't take it in—would you mind saying it again?"

"Remember—you have given me your word of honour to tell no one, till I give you leave. Not that I am ashamed," said Althea, holding her head very high; "but that I hate to be made a wonder of, and I know they all think 'tis Noel—thanks to Cousin Maverick's talking so about him."

Here she crossed her arms behind her head, leaned back in her chair, and looked defiantly at Fred.

"I swear I'll not utter a word!" said Fred, as earnestly as was possible to a mind still so taken up with this astonishing news, as to leave very little room for any other idea.

"Do you *really* mean to say, Ally," he asked, after a long silence, during which he had been thoughtfully gnawing the Moor's right ear, "that you are going to *marry* him?"

"Not till the war is over, of course."

"Oh, that can't be far off, with all this humble-pie we're going to eat, you know," said Fred in a tone of inward conviction, not shared by his sister—who remembered certain words of Colonel Fleming's about Independence being now the only thing possible.

"Do you really mean to marry Fleming, Ally?" he repeated, as Althea, lost in reverie, did not immediately reply.

"I shall marry Colonel Fleming, if I ever marry anybody; but I'm afraid the war will last longer than you fancy."

Fred began to whistle softly to himself. "I beg your pardon, Ally," he said, hastily checking himself. "I'm sure I've no particular objection," he continued, after a pause. "He happens to be on the wrong side, it's true—but we must have peace some day or other. But what beats me so uncommon is that I always thought it was Noel." Here perplexity set in again so strong, that Fred's eyes assumed an expression of bewilderment truly piteous in so well-grown a young man. "*Warn't* Noel in love with you?" he asked, in a sudden spasm of alarm. Having been so egregiously mistaken in one of his facts, Fred justly reflected that he might also have been wrong in another.

"I suppose he was," said Althea, shifting in her chair; "but then you see *I* never was in love with *him*."

"But I thought you couldn't *abide* Fleming," observed Fred. "Was all that put on?"

"I didn't know I liked him then—and he provoked me," replied Althea, turning very red. "Don't stare at me so, Fred; you've a dreadful habit of staring one out of countenance!"

"I'm sure I beg your pardon, Ally," said Fred, obediently wheeling his eyes away to a picture on the wall—apparently the portrait of an effigy, to judge by the wooden expression of its features. "I'm sure I always thought you was very unkind to him, and Cousin Maverick thought so too. Don't you think that perhaps you was in love with him all the time, and didn't know it, and that was why you disliked him so much?" he continued in a reflective tone. "I've heard of such things——"

"At any rate, I don't dislike him now," observed Althea

parenthetically ; "you may make yourself perfectly easy on that score."

"Oh, I do, I do!" cried Fred, wheeling round again upon his sister. "I assure you, Ally, I always thought you'd know your own mind, when you'd once made it up. I don't see why you should dislike him, I'm sure. I never could make it out. Depend upon it, you was in love with him all the time. The only wonder is that with your penetration you didn't find it out before now."

The first surprise being over, Fred's mind was able to entertain the consideration that Providence, in thus ordaining that Jasper should marry Althea, was kindly removing an obstacle out of his own path.

"I don't know why you shouldn't have him, if you want to ; he's as plucky a fellow as you could wish to see," he observed, thoughtfully sucking his cane. "I saw him at Bunker's Hill, and I never saw a fellow more cool. He told me afterwards that he felt mightily inclined to run away at first, but I think he meant it for a joke. I'm sure no one would ever have thought he meant to run away to look at him any more than I did myself."

"It takes a great deal of imagination to be a coward, my dear brother ; you have not imagination enough to run away with you," said Althea.

"That's the first joke you've made, Ally—why, I really don't remember when you made one before—not since we occupied Philadelphia, though you used to be always making 'em. It quite puts one in spirits," cried Fred heartily. "If you think, though, that I didn't feel beastly, when I was crawling through the bushes on my way from Saratoga, I'd have you to know my hair stood bolt up on end a dozen times at least."

Althea went across the room to her brother and kissed him—a favour which Fred received with the equable satisfaction of a Newfoundland when his head is patted. "I assure you, I believe it, for so did mine on the mere hearing of it," she said. He pulled her on to his knee, but chewed his cane for some time before he said, his eyes still fixed on vacancy,—“I'm sure, sister, I beg your pardon for having said you was unfeeling. I thought at the time as you took what I said uncommon well ; of course I know a woman can't always express her feelings. I wondered you wasn't more angry with me."

"I loved you for saying it," said Althea very sweetly.

"Of course," continued Fred, after a pause (during which he had again diligently consulted the Moor); "of course, 'tis a cursed pity he should be a rebel. To tell you the truth, though, Ally, I've rather changed my opinion about rebels. 'Tis our duty to fight 'em, of course, as long as the war lasts—and I think these concessions are positively shameful—but I see no reason why we should bear 'em any ill will after they've submitted; and so as our honour might be saved, I shouldn't care, for my part, if peace was to be signed to-morrow!"

CHAPTER LXVI.

CAPTAIN ANDRÉ PROPOSES A SURE METHOD WITH THE REBELS.

It was known that a French fleet was already on its way to the assistance of the revolted Colonies, and its arrival would render Philadelphia untenable. Many of the loyal residents had made preparations for leaving with the British army; and Mrs. Maverick took counsel on the matter with Mr. Galloway, the ex-Speaker of the Pennsylvania House of Assembly, and who was himself particularly odious to the popular party, for having acted as guide to Sir William on his march. Mr. Galloway rather advised her to remain. It was, he said, very unlikely that Philadelphia would again be occupied; while New York was sure to be constantly exposed to attack. No one would be molested, he added, who had not been actively employed on the royal side; indeed, Sir Henry Clinton had actually advised the magistrates and others who had acted for the British authorities to try and make their peace with Congress!

"I protest, 'tis enough to make one turn rebel!" exclaimed the indignant old lady, when she heard this. "Mr. Justice Jones may well say His Majesty is betrayed, when one of his Generals deliberately washes his hands of those who have served him faithfully, and tells 'em to do the best they can to get the rebels to pardon 'em for it!"

Mrs. Maverick had written to Mr. Gosforth, to ask his advice, but had had no answer; indeed, she had not heard from him, since he sent her the false report of Colonel Fleming's death.

"I know not what to do," she said to Althea. "If I return to Boston, I must reconcile myself to see changes that

will go near to break my heart; and if we stay here, this city will be the very hotbed of rebellion—for all that was said of its being so well affected! Fred must return to New York, and that ought to decide us to go there. 'Tis a dreadful thing at my age to be drove about from pillar to post; but when one has once been uprooted, 'tis easier, to be sure. And now to think that the French are coming to take part with the rebels! We live in dreadful times! I remember when I was a girl, there was an old minister preached about the end of the world; he said it was to come about the end of the century—and I'm sure I can quite believe it, if things are to go on at this rate!"

Althea did not reply. She had grown strangely silent of late, and had been restless and irritable.

"I really think, child, that seeing Mr. Fleming has put you in a bad humour," exclaimed Mrs. Maverick one day, when Althea had said snappishly that she was sick of hearing the army was to march, and that she would not pack her trunks until 'twas certain. "I protest, there's no pleasing you—you are in a dozen minds at once! I've not seen you so touchy this long while—not since Mr. Fleming was our prisoner in the siege. If the sight of one rebel can put you out so, I'm sure Boston is no place for us now, where they swarm like bees in a hive."

"Forgive me, dear cousin," said Althea, almost in tears. "I know not what has come over me. I am, indeed, as you say, in a dozen minds at once, and I sometimes wish——"

What Althea wished remained untold for that time; for the negro servant announced a visit from Captain André, who appeared carrying a beautiful bouquet in his hand, which he presented with the most charming grace in the world—saying as he did so, that he hoped the memory of its perfume might be permitted to mingle in the ladies' recollections of their last days in Philadelphia. "For we are to march for certain in a few days now," he added; "so few, that you may leave these roses, scarce faded, for the rebels to save you the trouble of throwing 'em away."

"Nay, indeed, Captain André," said Mrs. Maverick—who thought Althea might have said it herself—"they shall not be so served, I promise you! Sooner nor leave 'em for the rebels, I will press them in my *herbarium*, and carry 'em away with me."

Captain André protested this was too much honour; but

Mrs. Maverick made him ring for a bowl of water, and would have Althea arrange them then and there.

Meantime the Captain began to speak of affairs, and of the probability of the rebels attacking them on their march to New York.

"Not that they can do more than harass our rear," he said lightly. "But we hear the expected coming of the French fleet has put 'em in high feather, and that Lee swears he will make mince-meat of us."

The Captain went on to say that many of the Tories had resolved to remain, trusting not to be molested. "The Shippens will stay," he observed. "But, to be sure, fiends incarnate would respect the family of the lovely Miss Peggy." André said this, looking at Althea—but if he hoped to see a jealous flash in her eye he was disappointed; she only remarked that the Shippens were too closely connected with all the best families in Philadelphia, to have anything to fear.

"'Twould be terrible indeed to think of the lovely Peggy's father brought to the gallows!" cried André. "That is the punishment the rebels award to what they are pleased to call treason. They have just sufficient military spirit to know that to a man of honour, hanging is a thousand deaths in one."

"You can never be in any danger of it, Captain André," said Althea coldly.

"Thank God, no!" he returned. "But a monstrous odd thing happened to me once; 'twas just before I left England, and I was on a visit to my cousin Anna Seward. She had a gentleman there that I had never seen before; and no sooner does this gentleman see me, than he cries out to my cousin,— 'This is the same gentleman I saw in the dream I told you of!' And when I ask what he means, he tells me that a night or two before he had dreamed of seeing a vast concourse of people assembled about a gibbet, and a man brought out to be hanged—and this man, he declared, exactly resembled your humble servant. I protest my hand went up to my neck before I was aware," he said, laughing. "If I had been superstitiously inclined, I might have been made uneasy by his unlucky dream—but, as I told the gentleman, my features having nothing whatever remarkable about 'em, ten to one the likeness was a pure imagination. We are all the stuff that dreams are made of; but my cousin's friend might have dreamed a more civil dream, if he needs must trouble his head to dream

of me at all—and so I told him. Well, I wish I was as sure of one or two other things”—here he shot a sidelong glance at Althea—“as I am that I shall never come to be hanged!”

The Captain rattled on in this way—ostensibly addressing his conversation to Mrs. Maverick, but with every now and then a side-stroke for Althea. It was near sunset; and as Althea sat in the window, a rosy glow filled half the room, touching her hair, her cap, her neck, and the folds of her white dress, with a warm flush. The captain’s artistic eye took it all in very approvingly.

“Peggy is a lovely child, but Althea is a woman,” he thought, as he stole a glance at the proud grace of her pose, and the beautiful outlines of her cheek and neck. She was leaning her cheek upon her hand, and he could not see the expression of her face, but he fancied she impatiently tapped her foot when he began to talk about Colonel Fleming, and of the favourable impression he had made by his manly bearing in his interview with the Generals. He went on to lament that a different policy had not been adopted towards the malcontents, and more direct overtures made to the leaders.

“We should have made it their interest to accommodate matters,” he said. “The leading spirits here thought, with some reason, that their careers were intentionally sacrificed. There’s no doubt that if Colonel Washington’s services in poor Braddock’s expedition had been properly recognised, he would not now be the rebel Generalissimo. But he saw himself and his brother officers looked down upon, and passed over in favour of British officers of half their experience and claims, and became disgusted. And if Mr. Otis’s father had had the judgeship which was promised him, we should never have had those fire-brand speeches from the son, which set the Colonies in a blaze.”

“Ah, Captain André,” cried Mrs. Maverick, lifting up her plump mittened hands, “there you hit the nail on the head! I have always said ’twas folly to make enemies of the cleverest men in the Colonies, as we’ve done. And then to go and write such letters, and take so little care of ’em that they fell, Heaven knows how, into Dr. Franklin’s hands! Was ever such madness!”

“You may well call it madness, dear Madam,” returned André. “We began at the wrong end; we should have let men like Mr. Washington see that His Majesty’s service offered them a better chance than they can ever hope to make for themselves

by rebellion. Once assured of that, one half of 'em would come in, and t'other half would lose all credit. Colonel Fleming, for instance, is a man worth gaining. He should be sounded—Miss Digby, you should use your influence; I dare swear the Colonel would not take it amiss from *you*."

This was not the first time that Captain André had brought up Colonel Fleming's name, in a way plainly intended to let Althea know he suspected she had some particular interest in that quarter. She had hitherto affected to ignore these insinuations; but this time she turned upon her tormentor.

"I respect both myself and Colonel Fleming too much to attempt to cajole him into his duty," she said haughtily.

"She calls it 'duty,'" thought André; "then she is either not very far gone, or hath unconditionally surrendered. I did not say 'cajole,' Miss Digby," he said aloud. "You could sure make such a representation of the case, as would show the Colonel wherein his true interest lies?"

"Can you not conceive it possible, Captain André," said Althea, "that some at least of the rebels sincerely believe their cause is just, and would refuse with abhorrence all offers to betray it?" There was a faint touch of scorn in her voice as she spoke, but he chose to ignore it.

"Pshaw! my dearest Miss Althea, who talks of betraying?" he said lightly.

"What you say of *gaining*, and *sounding*, and *interest*, is vastly like betraying," she replied. "At least, 'twould be called so, were such overtures to be made by a French government to a British officer."

"That's in regular warfare—this is only rebellion," cried André. "Every word you say proves more clearly our madness in neglecting the leaders. Colonel Fleming is a man whose influence is more to be dreaded than that of a dozen mere orators. His stern unvarnished simplicity carries conviction with it—I protest I felt the spell myself. They say he was a lawyer before he was a soldier; and if to make the worse appear the better reason be the art of a lawyer, he possesses it in perfection. He might be one of Cromwell's Ironsides," continued André, in a more bantering tone, "who made war with the sword in one hand, and the Bible in the other—he hath lost the hand which should hold the Bible, but he threatened us more than once with the sword, t'other day. Have you ever read *Hudibras*, Miss Digby? You have, I'll be sworn—and remember

how the first canto opens. Is not Colonel Fleming hit off to the life?

‘Then did Sir Knight abandon dwelling,
And out he rode a-Colonelling.’

I protest I never think of him, but I imagine him singing the Hundredth Psalm through his nose, and leading his Roundheads to the sack of a cathedral!”

As André said this, he looked boldly at Althea, to mark the effect of his words. It was scarcely what he expected, though he had been prepared for her to show some resentment.

“If Colonel Fleming’s words carry any conviction with them,” she said in a voice which trembled with but half-suppressed anger, “’tis because he is, however mistaken, convinced himself of their truth. He was unhappily driven into rebellion by grievances which we all now acknowledge were real ones, and not because he had no hopes of advancement otherwise. He had, on the contrary, a very fair prospect before him, which he cast away from the most honourable motives. And he is as little capable of sacking a cathedral—or of any other act of wanton mischief—as he is of listening to such offers as you hint at—but which, I think, Captain André, you would scarce have the courage to propose to his face.”

Mrs. Maverick had made several attempts to check Althea, but could get no farther than, “My dear! my dear Althea!” Althea paid not the slightest heed to these feeble remonstrances, and would have fairly withered up the offender with her scorn, but for an unfortunate anti-climax which spoils her peroration. As ill luck would have it, the Captain’s nosegay had been set upon a small mahogany table with three legs, which stood in the middle of the bay-window, and Althea, in rising, overset it. The bowl fell into the Captain’s lap, and the water plentifully bedewed his silk stocking, while the table struck him a smart blow upon the knee. At this awkward juncture, the Captain had the best of it. Dissembling the anguish which the sharp edge of the table had caused his knee-cap, he was instantly on his knees picking up the table and the bowl—which, having broken its fall upon his person, had escaped uninjured—and collecting the scattered flowers; while Althea, much confused, rang the bell for the foot-page, and haughtily commanded him to fetch a cloth and wipe up the spilled water. By this time, Mrs. Maverick had recovered herself sufficiently to chide her cousin for her carelessness, and assure herself that the bowl was not cracked.

"I am very sorry," said Althea loftily—and then the absurdity of the situation struck her, and she burst out laughing. "Twas a pure accident, Captain André," she said, still laughing, "and in proof of it, I will lend you my handkerchief to dry your stocking with."

Although Althea laughed, there was a something in her manner as she conferred this favour, which plainly said,—“Do not presume to take advantage of my clemency.” He understood it so.

"I am not worthy of such goodness," he said penitently, as he accepted the handkerchief, and wiped his dripping shoe-buckle. "Believe me, I was but jesting—Colonel Fleming is a man whose disinterestedness 'tis as impossible to doubt as his courage—and I should never have called it in question, even in jest, had I not been convinced he would forgive me, since it hath moved Miss Digby to defend him."

The growing twilight prevented Captain André from seeing the effect of this sly thrust; but Mrs. Maverick observed that she really believed Mr. Fleming set great store by Althea's opinion—though he'd never said so—and, to be sure, when he was their prisoner, Althea had a particular dislike to him.

"When we are all once more in New York, Miss Althea," says the Captain, as he takes his leave, "I shall use my best endeavours to obtain your dislike."

"What on earth did he mean by that, child?" asked Mrs. Maverick, when he had gone. "I know 'tis said love often begins with dislike, but no one could possibly dislike Captain André. I really think you ought to give him a little more encouragement. 'Tis all he's waiting for, as any one might see with half an eye. Though what possessed you to take Colonel Fleming's part in that furious way, all of a sudden, is more than I can imagine!"

CHAPTER LXVII.

DR. YELDALL IS CALLED IN.

THE army was to move on the 18th of June. Every one's preparations were being made, and Althea had at last packed her gowns—telling herself, as she folded the one she had worn at the Mischianza, that her first duty was to her brother, and that all

other thoughts and hopes must be deferred until the peace. Peace! with the French fleet expected off the coasts every hour! Althea's heart sickened as she thought of it.

"If I had happened to like Jack André," she said to herself, "duty and love could have gone hand in hand, instead of love seeming almost a sin."

Althea was sitting amidst her half-packed portmanteaus, as she made these reflections. It was early in the evening, and the sun's rays seemed to have lost but little of their fierceness. She was hot and tired, and as she put away a little satin bag which she had begun to embroider as long ago as when she was at Bath, and had never finished, she asked herself whether she would not have done more wisely if she had accepted an offer—made to her as she was working on that very bag—to become attendant and companion-in-ordinary to a rich and peevish old relation of her father's. The ancient lady had never forgiven her for choosing rather to—as she spitefully expressed it—follow a marching regiment to the Plantations. Althea saw herself walking out with the pug, or carrying that poor angel when his asthma was more trying than usual, playing double dummy of week evenings, and reading Mrs. Rowe's *Dialogues of the Dead* on Sundays.

"On fine days, we should have taken the air in a close carriage," thought Althea; "and I should have been for ever letting down the window another inch, and then pulling it up again. We should have driven into Cirencester once a week, to match some worsteds, or to get a gargle made up for Cousin Theo's throat. I should have been scolded, if the greenhouse door was left open five minutes too long, or if the cook put too much cinnamon in the custard. Once or twice a week, the parson would drop in, and then we should play single dummy, and Cousin Theo would talk all the parish over. From one week's end to another, we should never have done anything worth doing, and yet we should have seemed never to have a moment's leisure. My life would have been spent in snipping off the dead leaves in the greenhouse, working at the tambour frame, and reading books to Cousin Theo, which she knows by heart, and always falls asleep over. Don't you think, Althea Digby, that even being in love with a Colonel in the rebel army is better than that?"

"I declare, child, you look like Marius among the ruins of Carthage!" says Mrs. Maverick, interrupting these flights of

imagination ; " I'm sure there's nothing so fatiguing as packing—I thought my knees would give way under me, just now. I must sit down."

"Then take my chair, cousin," cried Althea, jumping up, "for I must go on, or 'twill be dark before I am done."

"I daresay you feel it—'tis but natural you should," observed Mrs. Maverick, as she watched Althea deftly smoothing out the folds of the black and silver brocade. "'Tis a sad time for a young woman—just when you ought to be happiest, and to have nothing but pleasure to think about. I'm sure, if I'd known what was coming, I would have let you go to Mrs. Theodosia. Who knows ? she might have left you all her fortune."

"I could never have endured it," said Althea, on her knees at her trunk. "I was but just thinking, when you came in, that I would sooner have gone through much worse than have been a prisoner-at-large in Cousin Theo's house. I've ill repaid your goodness in saving me from that fate."

"My dear, I do not feel so sure I've done well by you," returned the old lady. "I hoped to have got you married before now—but what with the troubles, and your being hard to please—good gracious, Althea ! you don't mean to say you've tore that ruffle ? What a misfortune, to be sure ! I fear 'twill be impossible to mend it, so as for the darn not to show. What a pity !"

This was the ruffle which Colonel Fleming had thought was not much torn.

"I never saw such a rent in my life," continued the old lady, shaking her head, and clicking her tongue in fresh dismay, as she perceived the full extent of the mischief. "'Tis hanging in ribbons—positively in ribbons ! I suppose you caught it on a nail, for how else you could have done it I can't imagine ! real Mechlin too ! Did you know it when you had done it ?"

"Yes—no—that is, I did not think it was so bad. I mean, I meant to mend it," stammered Althea. "Let me put it away, cousin—it must wait now."

Mrs. Maverick looked at her inquiringly. "I sometimes fancy, Althea," she said rather tartly, "that you don't know what you *do* mean. Well, when I was younger, I was famous for my lace-mending, but I doubt if even I could set that ruffle on its legs again. You seem monstrous indifferent about it—'tis old, too—money can't buy such lace nowadays. How on earth did you do it ?"

"I did it at the Mischianza—you know I wore it then," said Althea, with her head in her portmanteau. "It caught on something—let me put it away."

"'Tis ruined, I fear," said Mrs. Maverick, still holding up the ruffle. "Why, there's four inches at least of it hanging in ribbons! Did you do it as you was dancing?"

"I really don't know how I did it exactly," replied Althea, rather too indifferently. Then she held out her hand for it, saying impatiently, "Please give it me—I daresay I can mend it."

Mrs. Maverick watched Althea as she folded the ruffle and laid it in the portmanteau; and then observed with ironical emphasis,—

"In my humble opinion, my dear, a young woman as can take such a mishap so apathetic as you seem to do, has either got some trouble on her mind, or don't know the value of Mechlin lace."

"My dear cousin, I know the value of this ruffle as well as you do," said Althea, ignoring the other alternative; "but what is the use of crying over it? Crying won't mend it."

"I came in, my dear, to speak to you seriously," said Mrs. Maverick, after a pause, during which Althea went on packing. "I really think 'tis time you made up your mind about Captain André—I think you should let him have his answer——"

"He has never yet put a question," said Althea, with heightened colour. "I've nothing to reproach myself with, cousin, about him—I wish I'd as little about everybody else. 'Tis an amusement to him to make love, but he cannot say I've encouraged him. I should be vastly obliged, dear cousin, if you would not refer so often to Captain André—'tis very distasteful to me to be obliged to defend myself. He knows perfectly well that I do not encourage him; he is quite clever enough to take a hint, and I have given him plenty. Pray let the subject drop, cousin—there's nothing I so much detest as a discussion of the kind."

"Well, my dear, I'm sure I wish to say nothing more about Captain André," said the old lady; "only that I hope when we get to New York—if we ever do—you may see some one worthy of you, as you can bring your mind to think of. As for Captain André, you've only, I'm certain, to hold up your little finger——"

"My dear cousin, Captain André loves to talk of love to

every woman he meets, but 'tis all for the sake of his Honora, whom, to do him justice, he will never forget. And, though I'm sure he is an honourable man, I would not marry him, were he fifty times as irresistible as most women profess to find him. I would not marry a prince, if I need go in dread of any other woman. He has but the dregs of his heart to offer—and I don't care if I own that's not enough for me."

"Nonsense! Althea," said the old lady testily. "You talk like a silly miss in her teens. Every man has had an *affair de cur* in his time. If women was to be afraid of a man's old flames, no woman would ever marry at all. For my part," continued Mrs. Maverick, pursing up her mouth and chin, and nodding her head emphatically, "for my part,—as I think I've told you before,—when I see a young woman that don't like this one, and can't make up her mind to t'other, I always have my suspicions that Mr. Right aint far off."

Mrs. Maverick stole a sideway look at Althea as she said this, and observed an amount of confusion in that young lady's countenance, very flattering to her own penetration.

"Well," she continued, before Althea could find anything to say, "I shall go early to bed, my dear. I could not sleep a wink last night for the heat. I feel an uncommon depression of spirits, and have had an headache all day."

Althea opened her casement when she was left alone, and looked down into the street, trying to conjure up Jasper's figure. People said imagination could do anything—but Althea tried in vain to make her fancy cheat her into seeing Jasper in the form of an elderly Friend who was soberly pacing homewards. It seemed to her that she no longer knew what she desired. Whichever way she looked, she saw nothing but the same cruel perplexity. A superstitious horror fell upon her, as though she had committed a crime. Thousands had perished already, and thousands more must perish yet, in this unhappy war—her own brother might fall in it; and, knowing all this, she had given her heart to one of the most inveterate promoters of the strife! "Even if, from his point of view, he is in the right," she thought; "even if I bring myself to own that he is fighting for his country, have not I betrayed mine, and forgot every obligation I should have remembered? Am I not ashamed to tell my cousin the truth?"

But the next moment, she indignantly asked herself whether she would have been ashamed to confess it if she had loved

Noel? Even Mrs. Maverick had not thought that unnatural. Yet Noel was a rebel too. No; the sting lay deeper still—and Althea—looking down into the street where she could never hope again to watch Jasper's coming or going—sternly told herself that she was a hypocrite. "Twas your pride was pledged to resist him; and now you are justly punished by seeing yourself compelled to humbly own you was in the wrong," she said to herself. "'Tis that you are ashamed to own; you are ashamed to say you love the man you have so long affected to hate. No!—not despise; I was never bad enough for that—though he said so!"

Here Althea permitted herself the relief of a good cry, after which she finished her packing, and then sat looking down into the street, until the stars were out.

Mrs. Maverick's headache proved to be the beginning of a nervous fever, which completely prostrated her. Her illness was brought to a crisis—she had been complaining some days—by a terrible shock she received about this time. A letter which reached her from a lady in Boston mentioned that a son of her old friend Mr. Gosforth, who had entered the Continental army, had been made prisoner in one of the winter skirmishes, and was lying in the Provost in Philadelphia. More than nine hundred prisoners were confined there; and although Mrs. Maverick had frequently visited some of those whose families she knew, it so happened that she never heard of young Mr. Gosforth being there, until the receipt of this letter, which spoke of the father's great anxiety about his son, and of his distress at having reason to believe that none of the letters he had written to him had ever reached him.

It was late in the afternoon when Mrs. Maverick received this letter, by the hands of a gentleman travelling on private business, who had accomplished his journey with great difficulty. She went the same evening to the Provost (in Walnut Street), and was infinitely shocked by meeting young Mr. Gosforth's dead body, being carried out for burial, with no attention to common decency—while the brutal Cunningham, three-parts drunk, hiccupped out a revolting jest on the dead rebel. Cunningham (not recognising Mrs. Maverick, and taking her for a relative of the dead man) even boasted of the number of rebels who had died in that prison—hinting pretty plainly that he had helped some of them out of the world, and hoped in like manner to help many more.

Mrs. Maverick was inexpressibly horrified by the whole scene. Through the good offices of Captain André, she obtained an interview with Sir Henry Clinton, to whom she told the story, and who promised her that Cunningham should be reprimanded, and that no such thing should ever happen again.

But although Sir Henry (warned by André that Mrs. Maverick was a staunch loyalist and a person of consideration) put the best face he could on the matter, the shock threw her into a surfeit, which was further aggravated by her bitter disappointment at Congress rejecting the astonishing concessions of Administration. Mrs. Maverick's life had been entirely broken up by the rebellion—her oldest friends scattered, many of them banished and ruined, others seized as hostages and held to ransom. One had even been condemned to death, for having sent notice of the proceedings of a rebel committee to Governor Tryon; and though the sentence had not been carried out, he was still a prisoner in Connecticut. If she went back to Boston, she would find the old faces gone, the old order changed; she would hear her old friends reviled, and see the men she especially abhorred installed in their places. Her whole world had crumbled away under her feet; and now when Great Britain held out both hands in reconciliation, she saw the concessions rejected with the bitterest contempt.

"I have mourned my husband for many a year," said the poor old lady, with tears in her eyes, when she first heard how Congress had received the Bills; "but now I thank Heaven he is not alive to see this day! 'Twould have broke his heart!"

Dr. Yeldall shook his full-bottomed wig over Mrs. Maverick when he was called in, said the sultry weather was much against the patient, and asked Althea if she was out of her senses, when she inquired whether her cousin might be moved in a covered wagon?

"If you move her till I give you leave, young lady," said the doctor, shaking his forefinger at her and swelling like a turkey-cock, "I won't answer for her! Just dismiss all ideas from your mind, if you please, and observe the following:"—as he said this, the doctor threw himself back, struck his cane a smart rap on the floor, and crooking his forefinger, presented the knuckle for Miss Digby's consideration—"The patient," he began—in the tone of one delivering a lecture, and marking the various points upon his fingers—"hath a *Synocha*, or Containing fever, which is caused by the salt acrimony of the bile;

to correct this, I shall send a mixture—to be taken six times a day, warm. For the vehement thirst which attends these Continuals, you shall have an altering decoction, made from the prescription of a famous English physician. For the beating pains in the head (common in Diaries), I will make up an unguent, to be spread upon brown paper, after the manner of a blister or pultis.”

Here he paused, and appeared to fall into a cogitation.

“There is also a decoction—into which taraxacum enters”—he observed thoughtfully, “for separating the bile from the blood, should occasion call for it; or as we say in Latin, *pro re nata*. The patient being of a plethoric habit, but not venomous, *vini spiritus* may be used with safety. If she does not sleep to-night, I will exhibit laudanum. Let not the patient sink too low; ’tis easier to remedy the superabundance of humours, than ’tis to repair the wasting of the solid parts. There is an excellent mild cholagogon—’tis of chicory, endive, cream of tartar, and a little rhubarb—which seldom deceives. Should delirium prove obstinate—she must be let blood. Well, well, we must see, we must see. Keep her warm enough, but not too warm; and never mention the word New York, nor any other word calculated to excite her spirits, within earshot.”

Having said this much, Dr. Yeldall again fell into a meditation, from which suddenly rousing himself, he exclaimed briskly, —“That is all we need say to-day. Should there be any change, you know where to send for me;” and bustled off, leaving Althea terribly perplexed.

Just then, Fred came in, and she repeated to him the doctor’s opinion.

Fred received it as a matter of course. “No one in his senses would say she ought be moved,” he observed, throwing himself into the least severe of the easy-chairs. He lay back in it, and slowly flapped his hat against the arm, without speaking.

“You can’t possibly come to any hurt, nor it can’t be for long,” he continued presently. “And so far as your own feelings are concerned, I should think you’d rather prefer it than not. You’ll have Miss Fleming; they’re certain to come here as soon as we go; and in case anything was to happen to poor cousin—Good heavens! Ally, you needn’t turn so white! the doctor thinks she’ll pull round, if she’s kept quiet—but one never can tell what may happen, and ’tis always best to be prepared for the worst.”

Here Fred somewhat lost the thread of his discourse, and returned to his occupation of flapping his hat against the chair-arm.

"Pray, be still, Fred, you fidget one to death!" cried Althea, irritated by the constant flap, flap—which sounded in her ears like "Stop, stop!" and yet more distracted her already disordered thoughts. Fred flung his hat on the table, and found what solace he could for being forced to sit still, in interlacing the fingers of one hand in those of the other.

"I wonder you don't jump at the chance of stopping, Ally," he said, observing her troubled countenance. "I should, I know—that is, I mean, I should if I was you," he added in some confusion.

"I've already told you, Fred, that I shall never allow my feelings to interfere with my duty," said Althea. "And you seem quite to forget that if we stay here, I shall be parted from you."

"Of course, I shall be very sorry for that," returned Fred, rather embarrassed. "But I shall be as good as leaving you with the Branzholms."

"How do you know they are coming to Philadelphia?" asked Althea.

"They're sure to come. Fleming happened to say that they don't much care about being at Lancaster—and Oglethorpe's out of the question; so there's nowhere else they can go."

"Then we really are to remain behind?" asked Althea, her heart beating fast.

"I don't see what else you can do," returned Fred. "'Tis more nor Cousin Maverick's life is worth to move her; and, 'pon my word, Ally, I should have thought as you'd catch at it." He looked at her as she sat, perfectly still and very pale. "I'm sure I don't understand your being in such a taking. If you like Fleming as much as you ought, I wonder you ain't glad rather than sorry to stay where you can hear of him——"

"Oh, Fred," said poor Althea, quite breaking down, "can't you understand that I feel I ought not to be glad?"

"Don't cry, Ally; I don't wonder you're upset—and of course it's a cursed awkward position to be in—I told you so at first," said Fred, drawing in his legs, preparatory to extricating himself from the depths of his chair. "But enemies have fell in love with each other before now—and as the thing has come about by no fault of yours, for my part I can't see why you should cry about it."

"You take the matter very philosophical, Fred," exclaimed Althea, unreasonably provoked at Fred's reasonableness. "One would think you was not sorry to leave me behind with the Branzholms."

"I'm sure, Ally, you've no right to say that," said Fred, turning red. "We're in a quandary—but things might be worse—and why you should fly out because I'm trying to make the best of it, I'm sure I don't know."

Fred's ingenuous countenance, as he said this, betrayed a guilty self-consciousness, which Althea would have noticed at any less agitated moment. The fact was, he had been considering that, if Ally could hear of Colonel Fleming by reason of her remaining behind in Philadelphia for a time, he himself might be able, owing to the same circumstance, to hear of Miss Fleming.

Mrs. Maverick continuing in a very critical state, there was no help for it. Fred took an affectionate leave of his sister, beseeching her to contrive somehow or other to get letters to him. The poor sick lady did not know him, when he went to bid her farewell. She lay tossing uneasily on her pillow, talking incoherently about young Mr. Gosforth (whom she evidently confused with Noel Branzholm), and reproaching Althea with being the cause of his death.

Althea's distress at her cousin's condition was so evident, that Captain André left unsaid several witticisms which he had prepared as Parthian arrows. He contented himself with assuring Miss Digby that he had a prodigious esteem and admiration for Mrs. Maverick, and was most sincerely afflicted at her illness. He trusted, however, that as soon as this extraordinary heat should abate, she would begin to mend; and with so many influential friends among the rebels (as 'twould soon be unsafe to call 'em in Philadelphia), they could have no difficulty in procuring a pass to New York, when the physicians allowed Mrs. Maverick to travel.

CHAPTER LXVIII.

IN WHICH PEGGY SHIPPEN IS INDISCREET.

WHILE the British army marched out, and the Provincials marched in, Mrs. Maverick lay so very ill that Althea was

aware of the change only as one is aware of the rumbling of a distant storm. Their landlady's little son, a hopeful young master of eight or nine (dressed in several dozen buttons, on a short roundabout jacket), did indeed present himself at the open door of the sickroom, on the Thursday afternoon, and after intently observing Miss Digby by the space of ten minutes, removed his forefinger from the inside of his cheek, and remarked,—

“Our sojers is come ridin’ in a’ready, now yours is gone.”

Althea came a step or two towards him. “Hush!” she said gently, “Mrs. Maverick is asleep.” At this, her visitor digressed in his stare at herself, and devoted a moment to the four-poster at the farther end of the room, his finger remaining the while suspended in mid-air.

Apparently, he found nothing so interesting as Althea, for his eyes presently returned to her countenance—his finger at the same time returning to its former abiding-place.

“I see ‘em,” he observed, nodding his head, and adjusting his small square person against the door-post.

“You must run away now, Tobias—you shall tell me another time,” whispered Althea, taking him by the hand which was at liberty.

“Mother says you’re sorry. Are you?” asked Tobias, looking up at her.

“Here is a piece of seed-cake for you,” says Althea, taking a slice from a plate on the drawers. “And now run away downstairs.”

“Are you sorry?” repeats the imp—taking care, however, to secure the offered cake.

Althea stooped down and kissed him. “I am sorry about a great many things which you are too young to understand,” she said; and then she gently put him out, and closed the door upon him.

Tobias looked at the door, and opened his mouth to raise a yell—but his eye catching sight of the cake (he had, indeed, very nearly put the cake into the said eye, with a short-sighted intention of holding it fast), he availed himself of this action to substitute it for his finger, and presently began to go slowly downstairs—with, however, many a backward look.

At about the same hour on the following day, he again presented himself—this time with the information that General Arnold was come to town.

"I see his coach," he added after a proper pause ; and in the same deliberate manner further observed, that many soldiers had come too, and that the music had played. Having imparted these facts all in a loud whisper—having regard to Mrs. Maverick's slumbers—Tobias was proceeding to ask if there was any more of that cake, as Miss Digby didn't happen to want for herself—when, somewhat to his consternation, he heard Mrs. Maverick's own voice, desiring that he would come and speak to her. As Miss Digby led him to the side of the bed, Tobias devoutly wished he had not disobeyed his mother, and come up to tease the ladies. He had always been a little in awe of Mrs. Maverick ; and having heard his mother say that Dr. Yeldall was very much afraid of her, he expected nothing less than to suffer personal violence at her hands. Tobias had never read the story of Red Riding-Hood (his studies having been as yet strictly confined to the horn-book), but he felt very much as Red Riding-Hood would have felt, had she known who it was that lay in the bed inviting her nearer approach.

Mrs. Maverick, however, seen closer, had nothing terrible about her except her night-cap—a portentous structure, and just then a good deal awry. Her eyes were bright, but her voice was feeble, as she desired him to tell her all he had seen.

Tobias, thus adjured, repeated his account, but added nothing of any value, and was presently allowed to depart with a second *douceur*.

It was the time of day when the fever usually abated, but Althea was not sure that her cousin had clearly understood the child's replies. She complained that her head felt confused, and evidently thought many days had elapsed since Fred went away, for she anxiously asked whether it was known yet if they had reached New York. Then she swallowed a little of one of Dr. Yeldall's decoctions, and seemed to fall asleep instantly.

Althea had heard enough with her own ears to be aware that the Provincials had taken possession ; and the doctor had mentioned that morning that General Arnold was appointed Governor of the city, and would come in in a day or two. She had heard the beat of drum and the sounds of music, and had gone to her own room (which looked on the street), and, standing behind the curtain, had seen people running, windows thrown open, and heads thrust out ; but she did not choose to be seen herself, and so had seen no more.

Dr. Yeldall had proceeded to all the extremities which he had threatened, and about a week after Philadelphia had once more become a rebel city, his patient's fever began to show signs of abating. This happy result may have been due to any one (or to all combined) of three causes. First, the remedies employed may have vanquished the disease; secondly, the patient may have begun to amend in spite of those remedies; or, lastly, Althea's judicious nursing may have chiefly conduced to Mrs. Maverick's recovery.

For, whichever of these reasons it was, Mrs. Maverick awoke out of a calm sleep on the day in question, and looking at Althea, who sat reading near the bedside, declared herself better, and said that she fancied she could eat something.

As this was the moment for which the doctor had been waiting, Althea instantly sent for him, and meanwhile administered some calves'-foot jelly, the making whereof below-stairs Tobias had followed with a painfully intense interest—only equalled by his disappointment, when, seizing a fortuitous occasion, he surreptitiously swallowed a spoonful.

"Yes, child, I'm certainly better, thank God," said the old lady, when the doctor had gone away—with the assurance that the patient might yet do well, if his injunctions continued to be strictly carried out. Now in this the worthy apothecary had taken too much for granted—the fact being that, appalled by the variety, number, and quantity of his medicines, Althea had allowed herself the license of a good cook, who usually brings her own judgement to bear upon the recipes she finds in the cookery-books. She had carefully watched the patient, and had administered the doctor's remedies in such doses, and with such frequency, as seemed to be followed by the best results. Mrs. Maverick had therefore swallowed about one-fifth part of the drugs which had been prepared for her. It is, of course, open to any one to maintain that, had she taken the whole, she would have recovered in precisely one-fifth of the time required by Althea's method—a quite possible assumption, as some constitutions seem able to bear anything.

Mrs. Maverick herself took the latter view.

"You can see I have been very bad, by the quantity of bottles I've took," she observed—her eyes wandering complacently over a side-table, whereon stood bottles enough to stock a small medical-shop—seeing her in this mood, Althea thought it better to keep her own counsel.

Mrs. Maverick next asked how long she had been ill? and whether the army had really marched? and was much surprised to learn that it was a week since they had gone.

"I thought somebody told me there was a Governor appointed to the city?" she said. Althea told her that it was General Arnold, and that he had already arrived.

"Then we are actually living under a rebel Governor," sighed the poor lady. "Is not Arnold the person that young Mr. Branzholm served under? I shouldn't wonder, Althea, but what Mr. Branzholm might be here—and if he is, I dare say as he could get us a pass, as soon as I'm well enough."

It had already occurred to Althea that Noel might be in Philadelphia, and the idea had caused her no little emotion. When, next morning, Mrs. Maverick insisted on her going out for an hour, while the landlady's young daughter sat with her, it was with a fast-beating heart that she obeyed. She had some marketing to do; and, as she emerged from the gloomy recesses of each shop she visited, she glanced up and down the street, expecting every instant to see the young Virginian's well-turned figure, stepping gaily along on the shady side of the way. But the sun beat down on an almost empty street, white with dust, and with every blind drawn down to keep out the heat, which, early as it was in the day, was already intense.

Mrs. Maverick improved so much, that when, a day or two after, Peggy Shippen called to inquire how she was, she insisted on having a fresh nightcap put on, and receiving the young lady.

"'Tis not a catching fever I've had, my dear, or I wouldn't ask you to come up," said the patient, as soon as Peggy's blooming face appeared in the doorway. "But I won't let you kiss me—just by way of precaution. Sit down there, and tell me all that has been going on since I've been laid up."

Peggy accordingly sat down—looking charming, in that very chintz which Althea had admired so much—and proceeded to describe the manner in which the British army had crossed the Delaware, and how the Provincial troops had instantly taken possession of the town.

Considering that he had been in town barely a fortnight, General Arnold seemed to have made a prodigious impression on Peggy. She introduced him into her artless narrative at every turn—until Althea could no longer resist the temptation of bidding her friend take care, or Captain André would hear next that she had gone over to the rebels altogether.

This speech (which Althea made without so much as wincing) brought an earnest protestation from Peggy that Captain André might think what he pleased. If he had wrote verses to her, so he had to Peggy Chew—there was nothing in that. Could not one be friendly, without being in love? She had promised to write to him sometimes, and she should tell him herself that she thought General Arnold as great a hero as any she had ever heard of—as great, in fact, as Bruce, or Sir William Wallace, or Richard Cœur de Lion—and Major Branhholm thought so too.

At the mention of Major Branhholm, Althea experienced an uncomfortable sensation, which in some measure punished her for the effrontery of her remark to poor Peggy.

"Major Branhholm thinks the whole world of General Arnold—the *whole world*," repeats Peggy, rather on her mettle, and looking straight at her friend. "He thinks there's *nobody* like him."

Here Mrs. Maverick observed that she was sorry to hear Peggy express so much admiration for a rebel, but she supposed he really was an extraordinary man; and asked how Major Branhholm was? and did he know they was in Philadelphia?

"Oh yes; I told him you was," replied Peggy. "He *did* looked pleased, to be sure! General Arnold has made him his secretary, and everybody says he's quite his favourite. 'Twas only last night I told him about you—he came with the General to supper—and of course I told him," says Peggy, with that word "rebel" sticking fast in her throat, but not quite bold enough to try a *tu quoque* on Althea.

"I shall be glad to see him, when I'm equal to it," said Mrs. Maverick wearily. "I think, my dear, as I'm a little tired, I'll ask you to step downstairs, and have a chat with Althea, while I try to drop asleep."

"'Twas, I protest, very unkind of you to say what you did, Althea," said Peggy with tears in her eyes, as soon as they were safely shut in the dining-parlour. "I'm sure you couldn't help but admire General Arnold yourself—and Congress has used him shameful—he told me so himself—and his wound will not heal, and 'twould make your heart ache to see how much he suffers! He could scarce get upstairs, even with Major Branhholm helping him—I protest it brought the tears into my eyes! And I think to go and call me a rebel is very unkind of you, and not like you, I'm sure."

"My dearest Peggy," said Althea—her own conscience crying *tu quoque* very loud, "I never called you a rebel—I only said——"

"That Captain André would say I had become one! I think 'twas worse than if you'd called me one outright! And I'm sure I always thought you was not all that indifferent to Major Branzholm—and I hinted as much to him."

"Oh, Peggy, Peggy, you surely did not say that? what right had you to say it?" exclaimed Althea, between anger and dismay. "How dared you say such a thing, and meddle with what did not concern you, and that you knew nothing of, nor what the consequences of your words might be?"

"I'm very sorry, dear Althea, if I've done any harm," says Peggy, much distressed. "Indeed, indeed, I meant only to encourage him a little, knowing how stand-off you are. And after all, I only said that Mrs. Maverick was always talking about him, in a way that had made us have our own thoughts about how things was; and I said it more in jest, I did indeed, Althea——"

"In jest! Oh, Peggy, you know not what you may have done!" cried Althea, in such evidently genuine anxiety, that Peggy burst into tears, and repeated that she had only said it in jest, and that she was ready, if need be, to tell Major Branzholm that she had had no right to say even as much as she did. So distressed was Peggy that Althea was obliged to comfort her, and say that under some circumstances it would have been of no consequence, and she was sure Peggy had spoken out of pure good-nature.

CHAPTER LXIX.

NOEL LEARNS THAT HE HAS A RIVAL.

I must have other answer, for I love you.

LOVE TRICKS.

MRS. MAVERICK had a relapse the day after Peggy's visit, and it was several days before Althea was out again. By this time news had been received of an engagement near Monmouth Court-House, in which it was said that General Lee had disobeyed an order to attack the British rear-guard, and was to be tried by court-martial. Tobias, with his usual candour, informed Miss Digby that the Britishers had been beat; but Peggy Shippen

(who of course knew all that was to be known) said that both sides claimed the victory. This, and the first terrible reports from Wyoming, were all the news from the outer world which reached Althea in her cousin's sickroom.

It was several days after this that her long-dreaded interview with Noel Branzholm took place. Althea saw him one afternoon, crossing the street (Mrs. Maverick having fallen asleep, Althea had gone down to the parlour to fetch a book), and he was shown up to her before she had time to collect herself.

Noel was excessively agitated, and his first greetings were almost incoherent. Althea thought him handsomer than ever, and was surprised to see how youthful an appearance he had preserved through so many toils and hardships. As she inquired for his father and mother, she found it almost impossible to believe that she had last seen him, nearly four years ago, riding away from Oglethorpe, to join Colonel Lewis on the Great Kenhawa.

She made a remark to this effect.

"'Tis a long while, I suppose," he said, looking eagerly at her. "To me it seems at once an age ago, and but yesterday. I have heard of you so often through my dear brother, that the separation does not seem so complete as it really was. How can I ever thank you for all your goodness to him? I little dreamed, when I showed you his letters, when we was aboard the *Fair American*, how much he was to owe you. I owe you most, though—since he's dearer to me than my own life."

No words can convey the slightest idea of the torture which every word of this speech inflicted on his listener. It was so great, that it was almost a relief to Althea, when Noel added in a more unsteady voice,—

"But we can speak of this another day. I have something else to say now. Miss Digby, ever since we parted I have looked forward to this meeting, as to the event I most desired of all that can ever concern myself; but something I have heard from Miss Peggy Shippen——"

"I'm afraid, Major Branzholm," said Althea, interrupting him—but speaking rather to gain time—"that Peggy said something very foolish—something she'd not the least right to say. I was very angry with her, when she told me about it. She is but a child, and meant no harm, but she might have done a great deal."

"I assure you, Miss Shippen is very penitent," returned Noel. "'Tis true, her first words was calculated to give me some hope, but her last gave me cause for nothing but fear. If

you require humility, I am ready to admit that you have never given me much cause of hope—yet I *have* hoped—and nothing but hearing from your own lips that you love another will ever make me cease hoping.”

Althea had sunk into a chair, unable to stand for trembling.

“Sit down,” she said faintly; and Noel took the very chair in which Fred had sat to hear her make her confession. This reminded Althea of a question which must be asked first of all.

“Have you seen your brother, or heard from him since he was here?” she said, all the blood leaving her face—except one red spot, which was lost presently in a burning blush.

“I was ordered the same day to join General Arnold,” he replied eagerly; “and, having been constantly on the move, desired my mother to keep all letters till she saw me—she is to come in a few days.”

“Then you do not know——” faltered Althea.

“I know nothing,” replied Noel, some haughtiness showing through his manifest agitation, “but that you made Miss Shippen feel she had done you a wrong, in ever so indirectly hinting to me that your indifference was assumed.”

“’Twas not assumed—nor was it indifference,” said Althea. “I had ever a sincere regard for you—though not of that nature——”

“Liking may grow to loving,” he said.

“Only if the heart is free,” she answered in a low voice.

There was a long silence. Althea could hear her heart beat, and the clock tick, and a man hammering half-way down the street. It was a long while before she ventured to look up. Noel was leaning forward in his chair, his head supported on one hand, while the other lay tightly clenched on his knee. He was gazing straight before him; the dark flush which she had noticed when he came in had deepened to an Indian swarthinness, as though the blood of his ancestress Pocahontas had leaped into his face.

With so much more that must be said, Althea could find no words that were not too abrupt and sudden—she dared not speak.

“Then your heart is not free?”

Althea started as Noel said this, and fell a-trembling worse than ever; but the necessity of speaking before he should see his mother, and receive the fatal letter, made her desperate, and she began to speak—at first in a hurried, almost incoherent manner, but growing calmer as she went on.

"I did not know—that is, I would not know it," she said. "I ought to have known it long ago, and 'tis there I have wronged you—but only there. But I told myself that 'twas not so—that the—the person I mean—was—was not—in short, I told myself I disliked him, when all the while I knew I could never forget him; and I did my best to make him think I detested him, and succeeded only too well."

Having said this, Althea paused a moment to take breath, and Noel burst out impetuously,—

"Then my misery does not even make another man's happiness?"

"He imagined I only rejected you because you was—a rebel," continued Althea. "'Twas poor cousin's fault—partly; she had made up her mind that was the reason, and nothing short of my telling her the truth would ever have convinced her to the contrary. And I scarce knew myself what 'twas I felt—I was so torn between a thousand conflicting feelings; and I had no right to suppose that person—that is, though I fancied he thought better of me than I deserved, I knew he would never speak a word of love to me, even if he felt it, while he believed I had an interest in another."

"'Pon my honour, 'twas very handsome of him—and, in a British officer to a rebel, truly astonishing," said Noel ironically. "Oh, do not look amazed, Miss Digby; thanks to Miss Peggy, I have a perfect knowledge of who is my rival."

"Oh, what an unhappy woman am I!" cried Althea, bursting into tears. "There's no way out; I must, it seems, break somebody's heart!"

"You seem to have broke both the heart that loved you, and the heart you loved," he said bitterly. "I think I could have borne to see another man honestly preferred to me—I do not know, my blood is hot, and I have loved you so long—but 'tis too cruel a mockery, to tell the man you do not love that you regard him as a brother, while you make the man you love believe that you detest him!"

"I am to blame!" cried Althea in great distress. "I own it; but not as much as you think. There was a circumstance, not of my making, which made that person feel in honour bound to conceal his sentiments. Forgive my saying it—but you know I never gave you any hopes. You yourself own that I told you from the first I could only give you a sisterly regard—"

"Yes!" he cried impetuously; "but a man hopes to the

last. If he has reason to think there's no more favoured suitor, he thinks the lady may relent—and even when there is, he sometimes thinks she may change her mind."

"I cannot change," said Althea. "'Twas a strange chance that revealed my own heart to me, and a stranger one that revealed us to each other; but once done, it cannot be undone. 'Twas that person's loyalty to you, which was the main cause of our misunderstanding each other so long—for had he let me know what he felt, I could not have treated him as I did. I took a wicked pleasure in making him think I hated him——"

"Then now he knows the truth?"

Noel asked this question, as though with the answer all hope must be abandoned. Althea blushed, but answered steadily,—
"He knows—but 'twas not his doing—I was taken on a sudden by surprise, and betrayed myself. But if I am to be the unhappy cause of any enmity between you, I shall be the most wretched woman alive—the fear of it has embittered every moment——"

"Oh, don't be afraid I shall call him out!" cried Noel, with a bitter sarcasm, which terrified Althea; "and I suppose if I wished to do so, he is far enough away by this time—even if he would accept a challenge from a rebel."

"My God! one would think I had played you false!" exclaimed Althea.

"Why did you not tell me before that you loved another man?" he asked angrily. "You put me off with soft words, and talk of regard and esteem—but if you'd told me there was another man——"

"I have been wrong, though not as you think," she said. "When you know more, you'll see in what a cruel strait I was. Everything conspired against me—and, as I've told you, but for a strange chance—so strange, that I must always think 'twas providential—that person would never have guessed my feelings, and we should have parted for ever. But if it had been so, I should never have married you; I don't say it to be unkind, but only that you may not fancy you lost me by that chance."

Althea hesitated, and then added very earnestly,—
"Before it happened, I had sent word to you by your brother that I could never marry you. Afterwards, I wrote to you—remember, as you read that letter, what I've told you—and that the person to whom it refers refrained wholly on your account from seeking an explanation with me long ago—and I knew it."

Even the raging jealousy which filled Noel's heart could not make him quite deaf to Althea's pleading. There was so much tenderness and humility in her tone, and she so evidently desired as much as possible to soften the blow she had given him, that his first angry thought that he had been played with yielded for the moment to a more generous feeling, and he said magnanimously,—“A man, I suppose, must needs hate his rival—but mine hath, I must confess it, used the advantage he had of me with so honourable a self-denial as I fear I could not have imitated. That you prefer him, is my misfortune, not his fault. And though I can scarce forgive him, he hath left me no excuse for hating him.” Noel had said thus much calmly enough. He went on more passionately,—“But, oh, Althea, I can scarce think he loves you as I do! He cannot say, as I can, that he never loved but you. All the world knows he loved a lady in England—and half Philadelphia thinks 'twas Peggy Shippen he sought here. By heaven, Althea, I will not give up hope! I cannot lose you! Why should I not say it? This honourable silence you make so much of, he *could* not have maintained it so long, if his love had been like mine! Seeing you so often, he *must* have betrayed himself before this! Mere generosity to a man he had never seen could not have so long mastered the strongest passion of our nature. Althea, you are casting away my immutable affection for the shallow fancy of a man who is—his very friends allow it—a general admirer. I do not say this to traduce him—I do not mean to cast a doubt on his sincerity—but how paltry must not his affection be, compared to mine! I will not insult you by talking of prospects—I know 'tis the man must win you—but I am as good a man as Captain André; a Virginian gentleman is as good any day as a soldier of fortune—and I offer you a heart which hath never been devoted to any other woman——”

Althea had in vain attempted to interrupt him—his words came like a torrent that would not be stayed; and only the opening of the door stayed them now.

“’Tis not Captain André!” she said, desperately clutching at this instant of silence; and then, turning to the door, saw Peggy Shippen—who, on perceiving Major Branzholm, seemed half inclined to run away.

“May I see you again—this evening?” Noel asked hurriedly. “I promise you I will be calmer, but I must know all; I see there’s some misunderstanding——”

"I'll come in again, Althea," said Peggy, who had not stirred from the door. But Noel had pressed Althea's hand and turned away. He made a polite excuse to Miss Shippen, said that General Arnold would be expecting him, and was gone before Peggy could recover from her confusion.

"Oh, Althea," she cried earnestly, "how sorry I am I came in! If I had known Major Branhholm was here, I hope you don't think I'd have come!"

"Dear Peggy, I think I'm glad you did," returned Althea, who was quite upset; "for though we had not come to the end of our explanation, I've sufficiently broke the ice to be able to write the rest, and I would rather stand to be shot at, than go through another such ordeal! I can't tell you now, but you'll know soon. Oh, Peggy, I'm in such an agitation, I don't know what I'm saying! You little guess in what a position I'm placed——"

Althea relieved herself by shedding a few tears on Peggy's neck, amidst which she said,—

"You naughty girl, you led Major Branhholm to suppose there was something between me and Captain André."

"Well, and aint there?" asked Peggy innocently. "I'm sure everybody thinks there is."

"I could find it in my heart to be very angry with you, Peggy——"

"I'll tell you exactly how 'twas," cries Peggy. "'Twas the evening General Arnold came to supper the second time—and my sister Betsy twitted me about Captain André, and General Arnold said, with a deal of meaning, that from all he'd heard, Captain André was a very dangerous young gentleman—and he looked hard at me, as if he'd say, 'And Miss Peggy, I doubt, has found him so.' And I was mad that General Arnold should think me so silly, so I spoke up, and said for my part Captain André might go to New York if he liked, and I wished him a safe arrival, and not to come back here any more—though to be sure, I said, 'twas Miss Digby he admired, and not me—and then I said I believed you had refused to be one of the ladies in the Mischianza, on purpose not to be *his* lady, because people had talked. And I gave Betsy my mind when we went to bed!"

Althea looked wistfully at Peggy's blooming cheeks and clear young eyes, and seemed going to say something, but she only kissed her and sighed.

CHAPTER LXX.

IN WHICH ALTHEA OBSERVES THAT ONE REBEL IS AS GOOD AS ANOTHER.

As soon as Peggy was gone, Althea went up to Mrs. Maverick's room, and, finding her still disposed for sleep, wrote a letter to Noel, to be given him if he should come that evening. But he did not come. He only sent a note by his servant, Black Billy, who was instructed to say that there was no answer, and was off so quickly, that there was no time to give him Miss Digby's letter.

Tobias, at his own request, conveyed Major Branzholm's missive into Miss Digby's hands. Evidently, something he saw in her face did not encourage him to prolong his visit, for—having glanced round to see if there might be anything about of an edible nature, and perceiving nothing but a cup of jelly—he drew his breath hard, inserted his finger more firmly in his cheek, and sadly withdrew—casting, however, so many backward looks, that he missed his footing, and fell down the first flight of stairs. Attempts to cry out during this too hasty descent produced only a succession of breathless and unearthly grunts; but, once arrived at the landing, he set up a sustained howl, which only partially subsided when Althea, who had run out on hearing him fall, took him up in her arms, and carried him bodily off to his mother.

"Didn't that tiresome child bring up a note?" asked Mrs. Maverick, when Althea came up again—after a longer delay than seemed necessary. "Who was it from?"

"Major Branzholm——"

"Now I look at you, Althea, I believe you have been crying—though you look better nor you did in the spring. I wish, my dear, you'd treat me with a little more confidence, and let me know what there really is between you and Major Branzholm. I take it very unkind that you keep me in the dark," said the poor old lady, with the peevishness of sickness.

"There's nothing, and never has been, cousin," said Althea, turning her head away, as she stood by the dimity-covered chair in which Mrs. Maverick was sitting, propped up with pillows.

"That's the old story," exclaimed Mrs. Maverick tartly;

"nothing—always nothing! *Nothing* don't make a fine young woman grow pinched and haggard—and won't hear a word about marrying, and huffs off one offer after another. Oh, you may toss your head! but there was Major Williams admired you vastly, and Mr. Burnet's cousin—I forget his name—and plenty more. You've had no lack of admirers—and I'm sure you aint by nature a prude! so if you huff 'em all off, it must be because you've fixed your inclinations elsewhere."

"But not on Noel Branhholm," said Althea in a low voice.

"Good gracious heavens! then why have you allowed Captain André to think so?" cried Mrs. Maverick. "I wonder, with your pride——"

"He chose to think it; I never said so," said Althea with provoking coolness. And then, all of a sudden, she knelt down and hid her face on the arm of the chair—a soft-padded and wide-spreading arm, which seemed to invite confidence—and said in a very low voice,—“Is there no one else, cousin, that you have never reproached me for not liking—no one you thought I disliked? Did you never think 'twas possible I was so insensible to one brother, because I saw too plainly the worth of the other?”

Mrs. Maverick was so completely taken by surprise that, forgetting her weakness, she seized Althea's hands, and pulled them from that young lady's somewhat confused countenance, before she had time to resist.

"Bless me! you may well blush, I'm sure!" she exclaimed, sinking back in her chair, but gripping Althea pretty firmly by the chin. "I never met with such duplicity in the whole course of my life! How long, pray, has this farce been going on? I wonder you can look me in the face——"

"I never intended to deceive you, cousin," began Althea, proudly meeting her cousin's eyes. But her own were full of tears, and she patiently submitted to be held in this ignominious fashion, until Mrs. Maverick's hand sank feebly on her knee.

"I declare, you've took my breath away, child," she said. "Who would ever have believed it possible? So obstinate a rebel——"

"You thought it possible I might feel an inclination for Major Branhholm—and I don't see but what one rebel is as good as another," returned Althea with some spirit.

"Ah, but he is a Virginian—I can never think of him merely

as a rebel," answered the old lady, with the logic unjustly said to be peculiar to her sex.

"Colonel Fleming is a Virginian too, on his mother's side," observed Althea.

"Indeed, Miss ! how long have you discovered that ?" cried Mrs. Maverick, half in jest, but half angry too. "I insist upon knowing how long this double game has been going on——"

At this Althea burst into tears, exclaiming that 'twas very cruel to use such words, and protesting that she had hated the Colonel from the bottom of her heart, until the news came that he was killed—since which, she further protested, she had never known a happy moment for thinking how unkind she had been to him.

"Um," says the old lady, throwing a whole volume of satire into that one indeterminate syllable. "So this, I suppose, is the explanation of his being in such extraordinary good spirits ? And pray, when did you settle it all ?"

At this Althea (who really took all this snubbing with a deal of meekness) sobbed that it was very hard to be treated in this way, for what one could not help—she was sure she had tried hard enough not to like Colonel Fleming—and the situation was dreadful enough, without anybody reproaching her. To which her cousin replied by bidding her leave her alone a little, and let her think about it, for the news had taken her breath away, and set her head all of a whirl.

CHAPTER LXXI.

A DARK HOUR.

Misery, like night, is haunted with ill spirits.

THYESTES.

WHEN Althea said that the situation was dreadful, she did not speak without warrant. The note which Tobias had brought her was very brief—it contained only the words : "My mother and cousin are come, and I have received your letter."

Althea looked at these words, until they seemed to be printed on her brain. She tried to guess at the mood in which they had been written, and imagined a meaning in every unsteady line of the writing—for Noel's dashing hand was less clear than usual,

and the last word was blurred. She went to bed very unhappy, and dreamed that Noel had sent Tobias with a challenge—either to his brother or to Captain André—they were inextricably mixed up in the dream. Althea awoke with a bad headache, and a sense of impending calamity, which ill prepared her to hear that the British army had been attacked and defeated by General Washington, at Monmouth.

Further reports did not confirm the news of the defeat—though every one agreed in laying the blame on General Lee—but the engagement had been hot while it lasted, in more senses than one—having been fought on a day of such intense heat, that it was said more than fifty men fell dead without a wound.

It was an inexpressible comfort to Althea, in this suspense, to receive a visit from Mary Fleming.

"Oh, Mary, I was never so glad to see any one in my life, as I am to see you!" cried Althea, throwing her arms round Mary's neck.

"What, not even Jasper?" whispers Mary wickedly.

"No—seeing him was not all pleasure—nor thinking of him either. You may laugh, but I protest I never felt much more miserable in my life," says Althea, laying her head very disconsolately on Mary's shoulder. "Sit down," she said presently. "There's a thousand things I've got to ask you, and I don't know what to begin with. You've got my letter, I suppose——" here Althea faltered a little—"Was you very much surprised?"

"Well, to tell you the truth, Althea," said Mary very deliberately, "I had been expecting it so long. that I had begun to think it never would come about!"

Mary had sat down, and was looking at Althea with an expression which had grown very grave.

"In Heaven's name, Mary, what is the matter? Has—any misfortune happened?" cried Althea, not daring to ask a more definite question.

Upon this Mary told her that as soon as they arrived they had sent to inform Noel, who had come round from Market Street almost immediately. He had appeared much disturbed, but had greeted them affectionately, and had waited upon Baron Steuben, who was lodged in the same house, and whose aide had been given the room which Mary had formerly occupied. By the courtesy of the Baron and his aide, Noel had been able to

arrange this matter; but on returning to his mother's apartment to tell her this, he had excused himself from staying any longer, saying that General Arnold was waiting for him. Before he went, however, he had asked if Mary had not some letters for him, and had taken them away with him.

"We neither of us said a word to him about you," said Mary. "My aunt has been in a perfect fever, ever since Jasper brought us your letter; and we both thought Noel had better learn it from you. He did not mention you, till he was going out at the door; and then he turned back and said,—'By the way, Mrs. Maverick was left behind very sick. You should go and see her—she is in Market Street, at Mrs. Greenway's, just opposite the chemist's.'"

"Well?" said Althea, as Mary paused.

"Then he went away. But this morning, the first thing, Black Billy brought this."

Mary here explored the recesses of the bag which served her for a pocket, and produced a small note. In it Noel merely said that he was that instant starting for Virginia on public business, and knew not how long he might be gone.

Mary had not yet shown this note to her aunt, having thought it best to see Althea first; but it was evident that the same thought had occurred to both the girls—that Noel's departure might have some other object than public business.

"'Twill be easy to find out, without directly asking, whether he was sent, or whether he asked for leave," observed Mary, after a pause.

Then Althea broke out into passionate complaints against the cruel fate which had doomed her to be the unwilling cause of misery to those she loved best. Was it a fault, she asked, to have admitted Noel to an innocent friendship? She had not contrived that they should sail in the same ship from England—she had believed till the very day they sailed that he was to remain over the winter. Fred knew whether on the voyage she had treated him otherwise than as a young brother. As though some instinct had forewarned her, she had checked even such harmless familiarities as everybody permits, and had been for ever parading the reserve of English manners "I behaved like the veriest prude!" said Althea, almost sobbing. "He was so young—so boyish; I saw I could play with him as I pleased, but God knows I did not! As soon as ever I saw his brother, I knew 'twas only some such man as he

that could win me—but his path led where I was determined never to follow—yet knowing him, made me more shy with Noel than ever. You know, Mary, that at Oglethorpe——”

“I knew at Oglethorpe that you did not love Noel, and I fancied that you loved Jasper,” said Mary, her colour rising a little.

Althea protested that she had not—that on the contrary she had always considered that everything, including Noel’s unlucky fancy, put it out of the question—that even when she had suddenly learned that Jasper was not dead, she had carefully repressed all personal feelings. And after all, what wrong had she done to Noel? she asked. The brother of the man she preferred was the last man in the world that she could marry—the very idea was horrible—indelicate to the last degree! She had resolved to keep aloof from both, as the only thing she could do—and but for an extraordinary sport of fate she would have done it. In a few days more, she would have been safe in New York, and everything over for ever.

“And I wish it had been so,” she sobbed—“though in that case I should, I know, never have had another happy moment as long as I lived! But even that would have been better than their quarrelling—perhaps fighting—about me!”

“I hope you don’t think, Althea,” said Mary with some warmth, “that Noel is so wicked as that? After what you say you told him yesterday, he must know that Jasper is even less to blame than you are yourself.”

At this Althea ceased weeping, and haughtily desired to be informed in what single particular she had been to blame?

“I never said you was to blame—nor ever thought it,” said Mary. “I said, ‘even less to blame than yourself.’”

“That implies I *am* to blame,” says Althea stiffly. “But I might have expected you would turn against me; I can’t wonder at it;” here she began to cry again. “I have brought you so much misery, I can’t expect you should do me justice!”

“But I do, dearest Althea—more perhaps than you know—but when you seemed to fear Noel might lift his hand against the brother whom he has idolised all his life, I confess I was hurt.”

“I’m too miserable to be reasonable—forgive me, Mary,” sobbed Althea. “I could almost wish I had never been born! How shall I meet your aunt? Will she not curse me?”

* * * * *

Noel left Althea in the full persuasion that his fortunate

rival was one of the many agreeable young British officers, whose praises had been sung to him by the ladies ever since he came to town. Her assurance that it was not Captain André had greatly surprised him. At the same time, it rekindled a spark of hope. The irresistible Captain André would indeed have been a formidable rival! The Unknown, be he who he might, must be less to be feared! Perhaps she had accepted him out of a sort of generous pity—he had heard of such things. At any rate, it was not André; and there's many a slip 'twixt the cup and the lip.

But all this was specious reasoning, and he knew it; and it was with a sinking heart and trembling hands that he opened Althea's letter—breaking, though he did not know it, the seal which Jasper himself had made.

As he read, it seemed to him that his heart had turned to stone; a numbness seized all his limbs, and with a stifled groan he sank forward on the table at which he was sitting.

It had been daylight when he read the letter; when he came to himself, it was dark. His brain seemed on fire. For a few moments, a great terror took hold of him. The darkness seemed to hem him in; perhaps it was only the strained position in which he had been lying which made him feel as though his arms were pinioned—he shook himself before he could be quite sure it was an illusion.

In the first instant of returning consciousness, he had been aware of a great calamity; but as the contents of Althea's letter returned to his memory, a perfect tempest of anguish swept over him—the whole universe seemed to have suddenly vanished into nothing and darkness, leaving but one clear thought amidst the chaos—Althea would be Jasper's wife. If time is to be measured by emotion, those few moments must be counted to Noel as years.

Presently, however, life began to reassert itself—and just as his bodily eyes perceived a star shining clear over the opposite house-roofs, the wild desire which had possessed him for an instant, to take but one leap at once out of life and pain, yielded to a mad impatience to read the letter once more, and assure himself it was not a mere nightmare.

Oddly enough, that one star, so like an eye looking out of heaven, had suddenly recalled the evening long ago, when, rowing up the Chaudière famished and exhausted, his sick and weary brain had conjured up the image of Mary Fleming.

He found the tinder-box and began to strike a light. He was a long while about it—flint and steel would not be hurried—but at last he succeeded in igniting the tinder, and setting light to the match. Noel's room was at the top of the house, but he had had it fitted up partly as a writing-room, and there were always wax-candles on his writing-table. As he lighted them, he caught sight of his face reflected in a mirror which hung against the wall. "Good God!" he thought, as he started at his own image—pale as death, except for some red streaks which made the general pallor more conspicuous—"I look like a murderer! Am I come to this?"

But Noel judged himself too hardly. Althea's words, little as he had understood them at the time, came back to him now, and even in the first agony of rage and jealousy, he had instinctively shrunk from letting his angry thoughts fasten on Jasper's image. He had cursed fate—but not Jasper. If he could have doubted Jasper, it would, he felt, have overset his reason. As it was, he was stunned. He had said to-day to Althea, that he could have borne to see another man honestly preferred to himself. So he thought he could—if it had been Captain André. What is, so often seems less bearable than what might be!

He read Althea's letter again—trying as he did so to remember all she had said to him about his unknown rival. He was still staring at the lines, with eyes that did not see them, when he bethought him that Mary had given him a second letter, addressed in his brother's hand. It had fallen on the floor. Noel picked it up and turned it over more than once before he broke the seal.

The letter was not long, and had evidently been written with a very bad pen—being, indeed, no other than the one with which Old Hallibut oiled his locks—but it was perfectly legible, and Noel, as he read, seemed to hear his brother's voice speaking.

"I could easily multiply words," wrote Jasper; "but there is but one thing much worth saying. I never was false to you—nor ever had any suspicion of the truth until the last instant. Had I been less zealous in your cause, I should not have learned it even then. Had I been ready to supplant you, I had eight months in Boston in which to do it. What I suffered then, day by day, ought (if you could realise it to yourself) to plead for me even at this moment. To think that the woman you love despises you, and to feel bound in honour to be rather glad

than otherwise that 'tis so—imagine, if you can, what that is ! Yet now, in the first moments of knowing my own happiness, I have wished a hundred times that Digby had left me to die in Boston Jail, before I came between you and his sister. I write this, having just heard what must take me whence I may never return ; but, if these are my last words, I say that God knows I was true to you.”

As Noel read Jasper's letter, and looked back on the past two years, he called himself a thousand fools for not having seen it before. And then he began to bitterly reproach his brother in his heart for his very loyalty. “Why did he not tell me his own heart was engaged too ?” he asked himself angrily. “There have been honourable rivals before now, who have agreed to try their fate, and accept the lady's decision. 'Twas but a cruel kindness to leave me in the dark. He must have been blind not to perceive she preferred him !”

By this time, those drops of wild Indian blood which Noel derived from the passionate heart of Princess Pocahontas were dancing about in his veins, like warriors round a camp-fire. Even they could not make him face the thought of killing Jasper, but he was aware of a fierce desire to kill somebody—or, as the next best thing, to get himself killed at the earliest possible opportunity. Visions of rushing madly into the midst of the enemy's ranks, and falling under a hundred wounds, presented themselves as the most heroic way of leaving a world suddenly become hateful. Meanwhile, he resolved to ask for a furlough, and go—no matter where, so long as it was out of Philadelphia.

He had just come to this resolution, and was endeavouring to think more calmly of what he should do, when a knock came at his door, and Black Billy, in a loud whisper through the keyhole, informed his master that the Governor wanted him—“in de debil's own hurry,” added Billy, in a yet more impressive whisper.

When Noel, having hastily composed himself, went to the Governor's private room, Arnold looked at him sharply, and asked him if he was ill ? Then, before Noel could answer, he said that some one must be found instantly to carry a despatch to Colonel Clark, who was on the point of starting to chastise the Indians in the Illinois country.

“Will you send me, sir ?” said Noel, so eagerly that the

General looked at him curiously. He turned over his papers before he replied, glancing at Noel from time to time.

"The service might take from a fortnight to three weeks," he observed. "I do not see how I can spare you so long."

Noel sat respectfully silent, but was so evidently disappointed that the General once more asked what ailed him?

"I—I am not very well, sir—that is, I think a few days' hard riding might—restore me," stammered Noel.

"You mean, I suppose, that you wish to be out of Philadelphia for a few days," says the General, looking at him very hard, as he wipes his pen, and perfectly well remembering that Peggy Shippen had said Captain André admired Miss Digby.

"Well," says the General presently, eyeing his young secretary's haggard countenance with a grim smile of pity. "You look out of sorts. I suppose I shall have you laid up, if I don't let you go. Knox pretends he dursn't let his wife come in, the place stinks so. I don't observe it—but you'd better go. Don't get yourself killed; and get back as soon as you can. These sleek fat Philadelphians mean I shall not sit on roses—they think a military Governor is to be their creature, and stand cap in hand before their high mightinesses. You must start in two hours. Here are your despatches, and these are your instructions. Give me your full attention, whilst I explain them to you."

It was thus that Major Branhholm vanished so suddenly from Philadelphia.

CHAPTER LXXII.

NOEL LOOKS BACK.

MAJOR BRANXHOLM returned, after about a fortnight's absence, looking not much the better for his hard riding. He had, indeed, ridden very hard, and, finding on his return journey that he was within a day's ride of Oglethorpe, and that he had discharged his duty rather under the time assigned to him by General Arnold, he had paid it a flying visit—to the immense delight of Nebuchadnezzar, who insisted on giving an account of his vice-regency, in a grandiloquent style worthy of Lord Baltimore himself.

To Noel everything at Oglethorpe seemed changed. As he stood in the great verandah, and tried to recall the evening

when with Mary and Althea he had watched the mysterious armies contending in the clouds, the very hills themselves seemed to wear an unfamiliar expression. How often had he dreamed of bringing Althea home ! Perhaps the fiercest struggle of all was fought out here, in his old home, as he forced himself to look forward to the future. Of course, he should never marry—as the years went on, he would be left alone at Oglethorpe. It would be better never to see Althea. Mary would marry Graydon's cousin—any fool, it seemed, could get a sensible woman to marry him !

From these profitable reflections, he was aroused by a smart peck, which drew blood from his finger, and became aware that for the last five minutes Polyphemus had been endeavouring to get at a ring whose stone flashed invitingly in the candle-light. It was a sultry night, and the window was open. Noel made no attempt to go to bed. Perhaps the wound on the head which he had received at Saratoga had increased his natural excitability ; but his situation was sufficiently strange to account for the odd fancies which beset him. He imagined that the very bed-posts wore a look of intelligence, and that the old-fashioned ewer winked at him. He was terribly oppressed by the loneliness of the great empty house—room after room, as he knew, lying in unechoing silence—unless, perhaps, the mice kept holiday there. One had just scampered across his own chamber-floor, to be instantly pursued by Polyphemus, who after reconnoitring the wainscot, had retired to a chair-back, and seemed to Noel like an incarnate Evil Genius. A bat flew in, and put out the candle, just as Noel's ear was caught by an indistinct sound without. Before he could relight it, he heard Nebuchadnezzar's voice, calling as he ran along the corridor,—“ Mas'r Noel ! Mas'r Noel ! wake up ! wake up ! de Injuns is on us ! ”

For the next two or three hours, it seemed quite possible that Noel's future was about to be provided for in the simplest possible fashion. An express had come in—sent to warn all the valley of an Indian raid. His report was derived at second-hand from those who had seen the Indians marching ; but vague as the warning was, it could not be neglected. Oglethorpe, already in a position of defence, was hastily turned into a fortress—windows boarded up, bushes cut down, and all the negroes collected in the house. Half-a-dozen white men came in before morning, and Noel had his own escort—consisting, however, of only two

troopers. Nothing could be done till daylight. By all accounts the Indians must be at least fifteen miles off, and could hardly arrive before dawn—their usual time for attacking. Noel had not contemplated seeking death from Indian tomahawks, when he conjured up that reckless charge which was to solve all his difficulties. If the expressman's report was true, there could be little hope of doing more than selling their lives as dear as possible, and not falling alive into the hands of those incarnate fiends.

It is a singular fact (and one which those philosophers who doubt whether life be worth living appear to be scarcely aware of), that the more certain and inevitable death seems to be, the less does he seem desirable. Very few persons of even apparently sound mind try to commit suicide a second time. At sunset, Noel Branzholm honestly fancied that he could hail death as a deliverer. By the next day at noon, he heard with infinite joy that—so far as regarded Oglethorpe—the alarm was false. It was true that a band of Shawnees had crossed the Alleghanies, and taken some spoil, but they had recrossed the mountains, and the panic around Oglethorpe had had no more formidable origin than the unearthly yells raised by a party of drunken troopers, and half-a-dozen negroes, who were out seeking some strayed cattle.

If Noel had needed anything more to reconcile him to continued existence, he must have found it in the horror and thankfulness with which his mother and Mary listened to this tale—which he had strictly charged Black Billy not to divulge, but which Billy confided (under an oath of secrecy) to the black man at the Slate-Roof House, from whom it rapidly spread until every one had heard it.

Mrs. Branzholm had a long and confidential conversation with her younger son about this time, in the course of which she displayed more wisdom than might have been expected of so impulsive a person. But she could not find much to say in answer to Noel's pitiful complaint that if it had been Captain André, and Althea had been going back to England, he might have got over it in time; but that he was certain he could never bear to meet her as Jasper's wife—the very love he bore his brother made it, he said, the more agonising—since the feelings he could not control were a wrong to Jasper. He wished he had never been born——

"Then your father and I count for nothing, cruel boy!" cries his mother, bursting into tears. "As though I had not suffered enough since the war began—my hair's gone white—I should think you might see it—with always expecting to hear my husband or my sons was killed—but my sons must quarrel, and declare they never can meet each other again!"

"Did Jasper say we never could meet again?" asked Noel, turning pale and the tears starting to his eyes. "I should not have thought he cared so little for me, as to give me up so easy——"

"He did not say it in the way you imagine—the wicked way you've just said it yourself," said his mother—whose woman's wit showed her in an instant that she had accidentally touched the right string. "He sacrificed his inclinations for your sake—you seem to have quite forgot that. You made him carry your message to Althea—and Althea told me how hard he pleaded for you, and how it maddened her, when she loved him all the time. And though I never guessed the cause of his melancholy, I saw how changed he was—and so did you, at Valley Forge, and told me you'd give your life to make him smile as he used to! I thought what a loving generous brother you was, and how blessed I was to have two such sons—and now you say you never wish to see him again!"

"I didn't say so, mother; I said the feelings I can't control would make it so painful for us both and—for all parties concerned—that we'd best not meet. And Jasper, it seems, agrees with me, though I own I'm hurt he could say it so coldly——"

"You are wickedly determined to misinterpret him!" said Mrs. Branhholm. "Cold indeed! when was Jasper ever cold? He is in the utmost distress about you; he told me with tears in his eyes, that the thought of his gain being your loss must be a perpetual grief to him. 'Twill come between us—I foresee it,' he said; 'Noel will, I fear, never get over the soreness.' Very few brothers, let me tell you, are like him. Ever since you was a baby, he was wrapt up in you. I've seen him carry you in his arms for hours together, as if he was your nurse instead of your brother. And when he went away to Boston to his uncle's, he cried all night, and the last thing he said when he went away was, 'Mother, do take care of Noel, for if anything was to happen to him, 'twould break my heart.'"

"I know it all!" cried Noel, the tears in his eyes oddly

struggling with a smile provoked by memories of the happy-go-lucky bringing-up they had enjoyed at Oglethorpe and the sundry kinds of dangers their childhood had incurred—which fully explained Jasper's anxiety.

"Oh, gracious Heaven! he is gone distracted!" exclaimed Mrs. Branhholm, wildly wringing her hands, as Noel suddenly burst out laughing. "Mary! Mary!"

"Nay, mother, I'm not distracted, though I've enough to make me," said Noel, gently detaining her, as she was about to run out of the room to call for help. "God knows I'm not in a laughing humour—but I remembered letting Jasper down the well—'twas to save me from going that he went."

"Don't cry, my dear boy, don't—" said his mother, soothing him as if he had been a baby, "though perhaps 'twill do you good."

The adventure of the well, which thus moved Noel to laughter and tears, was on this wise. Noel, while still wearing his first suit of distinctly masculine attire, was possessed by a vehement longing to see what was down a certain well. For this, Uncle Memnon was greatly responsible—as, whenever he was unduly pressed by the children to account for the origin or end of his mythical personages, his reply invariably was that the prince, princess, dwarf, giant, ogre, or dragon, had come up out of, or had vanished down, the well aforesaid. Noel, for whom a daring scheme always had a huge fascination, proposed to Jasper that they should go down, and see what was there in very deed—Nebuchadnezzar having broadly hinted that Uncle Memnon's stories were "stuff and lies." Jasper's more mature judgement vainly represented that the well was deep, that the chain might break, and that whatever might not be at the bottom, there would certainly be water enough to drown one.

The boys argued this point till they came to words—Jasper declaring nothing should induce him to let Noel down; while Noel, with undignified tears, vowed he would let himself down some day when there was nobody by—but go down he would. So saying, he began to march off in dudgeon, with as much dignity as five years can command, and was engaged in maturing a plan for letting down the bucket, when Jasper followed him, and offered to be let down himself on condition Noel would promise never to go. After much demur, this offer was somewhat ungraciously accepted—it being obvious to the meanest understanding that Jasper was getting the best of the

bargain. He accordingly put his feet into the bucket, grasped the chain, and directed his brother to unwind slowly.

But alas ! Jasper had entirely left out of account the Laws of Motion, and of Natural Philosophy in general. No sooner had Noel's infantile hands, with infinite labour, made half a turn at the windlass, than it flew out of his fingers of (as it appeared) its own proper motion, and spun round and round, faster and faster—the handle hitting Noel a smart blow on the chest as he wildly clutched at it—until it stopped with a jerk and a quiver.

It was fortunate for Jasper that the chain, being clumsy, considerably modified that ratio of impetus known as the Law of Falling Bodies. But he was brought up with an ugly jolt, and very nearly lost his hold. Noel alternately shrieked for help, and tried to look down the well—with feelings of despair, to describe which words are totally inadequate. Several weeks appeared to him to have elapsed before Nebuchadnezzar came running up, attracted by his young master's cries. His horror on the situation being hastily explained to him, nearly drove Noel to jump down the well after his brother.

"He dead for certain—dere aint no more hopes on him nor what dere is on a door-nail !" he exclaimed, tearing his woolly top-knot. "Mas'r Jasper, you dead ?" he bellowed, leaning over the well. Never did Noel forget the rapture with which he heard a hollow voice reply, faint and far, and as from the bowels of the earth,—

"Wind me up gently, and dont jolt me !"

And in due time Jasper reappeared—wet to the middle, and with pale face and bleeding hands, but otherwise unhurt—and, having regained the upper air, remarked, with well dissembled coolness, that, as he had expected, there was nothing on earth to see when you was down. But though Jasper thus chose to brave it out, he was more shaken than he would own, and was ill the next day—whereupon Noel confessed the whole affair.

The remembrance of this escapade, which had so nearly been a tragedy, knocked strangely now at Noel's heart, and asked him what he was doing ? He had hitherto taken for granted that he could put an end to the estrangement between his brother and himself by a word ; and, although the wound was still too recent for him to be able to utter that word, he knew he should say it sooner or later. It was quite a new idea that Jasper should see any difficulty in a reconciliation. Noel keenly resented it—but the effect upon his mind was not altogether unwholesome.

CHAPTER LXXIII.

RUDE BOREAS.

"If France and Spain had not joined America,
Both by the land and sea,
Mine Got! George King would make dem know
For vat dey spill'd his tea!"

If Captain Digby had been apt at Scripture quotations, he might have been tempted to say that the stars in their courses fought against him. A fairer opportunity for a decisive battle was never offered, than on the parched and sandy field of Monmouth, and Digby bitterly lamented the extraordinary and intolerable heat of the weather, which alone, he believed, had deprived the British arms of a great victory.

The rebels, while admitting that the 28th of June, 1778, was the hottest day ever known, attributed *their* failure to gain a great victory to the ill conduct of General Lee. Vaulting ambition never overleapt its selle more wofully than in his case. Whether he was a deliberate traitor—or only an ambitious intriguer—may possibly be open to doubt; but there can be no doubt that his disobedience at Monmouth was due to his determination to outshine his Commander—or that this disobedience was as great a mistake as that other disobedience had been, which had resulted in his ignominious capture at Baskenridge.

The Powers of Nature did not confine their interference to the land. Those somewhat pagan references to Old Neptune in which naval poets so frequently indulge, might very well have been suggested by the part which the winds and waves played on the coasts of North America, during the weeks immediately following the evacuation of Philadelphia. Nor was that other pagan divinity, Madam Fortune, much less conspicuous.

Old Neptune began his work insidiously. First of all, by a series of calms, he kept Admiral Howe in the Delaware with his transports, until the very day that the Battle of Monmouth was fought, and did not let him anchor off Sandy Hook till the next afternoon. In a terrible storm of the last winter the sea had broken over, and made the Hook an island, and the Admiral had to build a bridge of boats in all haste—though

even he did not know how urgent the case was, and that the French squadron had got out of Toulon, and would have been down upon him while he was entangled in the navigation of the Delaware, but for contrary winds—for Old Neptune showed no respect of persons.

Sir Henry Clinton reached Middletown the same day, and there halted his main army, in the hope of tempting Washington to renew the battle. Meantime, the sick and wounded, the baggage, horses and cattle were sent across, and on the 3d of July, the entire army passed to Sandy Hook in two hours, and were safe in New York before night.

Sir Henry had barely received General Pigot's report of what had been done in Rhode Island, when news came that D'Estaing had been seen off Virginia on the 5th—and on the evening of the 11th, fifteen French sail dropped anchor outside Sandy Hook bar.

The utmost excitement prevailed in New York. The British fleet was too inferior in numbers to risk an engagement; but Admiral Byron's squadron was expected every day, and meanwhile the most strenuous preparations were being made by Lord Howe; and many officers of the army volunteered—among them some with wounds still unhealed from Monmouth. Captain Digby was one of these; entirely disregarding a bad sword-cut on the shoulder, he offered his services, and had the luck to draw a fortunate lot (for there were more volunteers than could possibly be accepted), and to find himself on board Commodore Hotham's ship, the *Preston*, when, on the morning of the 22d, the Frenchmen, drawn up in line-of-battle, seemed to be coming over the bar. It was the spring-tides, with an easterly wind, and the water had risen thirty feet over-bar that afternoon. It was said that Black Dick himself thought the odds too great; but few, indeed, were the Englishmen who at the bottom of their hearts were not praying Heaven that D'Estaing might get a pilot to put him over, and who were not grievously disappointed, when those swelling sails stood away to the southward, with the wind on their larboard quarter—watched by thousands of eyes, till the last top-gallant was a speck on the horizon.

Three days after this, the *Despatch* came in from Halifax, with the *Renown*; and in another day or two, Byron's squadron began to drop in—not riding proudly with all sail set and colours flying, but dismasted, disabled, and all but wrecks.

The Admiral had been caught in a storm on the 3d, and his ships driven no one knew whither. Howe determined not to wait for him—especially as he had received intelligence from Captain Brisbane (stationed off Newport in the *Flora*), that D'Estaing had reappeared off Rhode Island. As the rebel General Sullivan was preparing to cross from the Jerseys, General Pigot would presently find himself between a fleet and an army, and no time must be lost, if he was to be saved.

Still the winds were contrary, and it was the 9th of August, before the British fleet arrived off the island. There, a galley brings letters from Captain Brisbane, to say that the Frenchmen entered the harbour yesterday, and are now at anchor off Brenton's Reef; that the British frigates have been burned, and the transports sunk, to prevent their falling into the enemy's hands; and that the time Pigot and his garrison can hold out only depends on how many men and guns Sullivan may be able to bring to bear on them.

Captain Digby (who seemed doomed to ride on the sea-saw of hope and despair) crawled into his bunk very sadly that night, having heard that the Admiral thought it impracticable to raise the blockade. But next morning he was aroused out of a sound sleep by a general commotion; and, struggling into his coat, and buckling on his sword as he tumbled up on deck, he found that the wind had veered to the N.E., and that the French Admiral seemed to be going to move.

Sure enough, before long the Frenchmen stood out, the huge *Languedoc*, with the Admiral's Broad Pendant flying from her mainmast, and the Royal Standard of France flaunting from her mizzen.

"There are the French lilies!" cries Fred to his friend Lieutenant Wickham, as the smoke of the volley fired by the batteries on Brenton's Point as they pass, clears away. "Oh, how I pity those poor fellows as drew the stay-at-home lots! How they will envy us, to be sure!"

But alas! Captain Digby reckoned without his host. Neptune (perhaps resenting the liberty his self-invited guests were about to take with his domain) so contrived the wind, that that day and the next were spent by the two fleets in a mere contest of seamanship—the British Admiral trying to get the weather-gage, while the Frenchman tried quite as hard to keep it. And when on the evening of the second day, Black Dick resolved to fight whether or no (that is, as Lieutenant Wickham

gravely explained to Digby, *weather-gage* or no), the wind suddenly increasing to a gale, broke up their battle-array, and scattered their navies far and wide.

But though Father Neptune had thus put a stop to the action, the British fleet did not return to New York without firing a few broadsides. After being beaten about for two days, the Commodore fell in towards evening with a Frenchman; who proved to be the *Tonnant*. She had only her mainmast standing—but the *Preston* had but fifty guns to her eighty. The Commodore instantly joined battle, and must have taken her, had not the stormy breezes once more interposed. These, and the coming on of night, obliged the *Preston* to draw off, and early in the morning, part of the French fleet hove in sight, and she could not renew the engagement.

It is needless to say, that during all this time Captain Digby freely cursed the elements, and congratulated himself on belonging to a Service so much less subject to such disappointments, and on having declined the kind offer of a relative to take him into his own ship, if he would go into the Navy. As he observed to Wickham—on land, you can nearly always make the enemy fight, if you've really a mind that he shall. "Though, to be sure," he added parenthetically, "in this confounded war, the rebels seem somehow or other to contrive only to fight when *they've* a mind to. But at sea, you often *can't* fight—not if even both sides have the best will to it in the world. If a storm comes on—why, there you are."

"I wish you was!" groaned Wickham—who had borne up heroically so long as there was the chance of an engagement; but who, when that hope was over, had yielded to the natural weakness of the human stomach, when confronted with angry billows. "I wish you was—that's just where it is—you aint there. You're Lord knows where."

When the scattered squadron had returned to Sandy Hook, Captain Digby derived a certain gloomy satisfaction from comparing his own fate with that of others. Captain Dawson, for instance, in the *Renown*, had fallen in with the huge *Languedoc*, completely dismasted, and had all but made sure of her—when he too was stopped by night and the freshening gale; and in the morning he had been chased by six sail, and thus lost the glory of bringing the French Admiral prisoner into port. And the *Isis* had engaged a seventy-four, supposed to be the *Zelee*, fought her for an hour and a half within pistol-shot range, and

was having much the best of it, when she crowded all sail and escaped.

Meantime, the garrison on Rhode Island were saved from certain destruction. The French fleet had suffered so much in the storm, that their Admiral insisted on going to Boston to refit, and General Sullivan found himself in a very unpleasant predicament. He resolved to retreat before Sir Henry Clinton could come from New York, and did so, without much loss, the very day before Clinton arrived. Captain Digby was with the General, and his disappointment at once more coming just too late was soon after made amends for, by his being appointed aide-de-camp to General Grey, then about to proceed on an expedition against the privateers which infested the eastern coasts.

The autumn and early part of the winter wore away in this and similar expeditions. Captain Ferguson of the 70th destroyed another nest of privateers, at Egg Harbour, in October; and, being detained by contrary winds, and learning—from a French captain who had deserted—that Pulaski's legion kept very careless watch, cut them nearly to pieces in a night-surprise.

Ever since the destruction of Wyoming in July (which consigned Colonel John Butler's name to everlasting infamy), there had been a desultory border-warfare going on in the back country—seldom, however, rising, on the Indian part at least, much above the dignity of murder. General Washington was in camp at Middlebrook; and the rebels, it was reported, were heartily disgusted with the French fashion of helping an ally. There had even been a riot in Boston, and General Sullivan had expressed his own opinion of D'Estaing in an Order of the Day, in terms which had nearly brought about a rupture. On the other hand, Congress had rejected all the overtures of the Commissioners, and it was said that two Quakers had been hanged in Philadelphia.

Two or three letters had reached Fred from his sister, in each one of which she spoke of returning to New York, and to each of which Fred was obliged to reply that his own continuance in that city was very uncertain, and that, all things considered, she had better stay where she was.

He dared not be more explicit—but the fact was that a Southern expedition had been planned, in order, among other objects, to stop the exportation, which was the chief support of the Continental credit. Captain Digby had been promised his

promotion ; but rather than remain longer idle, he accepted a company in one of the light-infantry corps attached to the 71st Highlanders, and sailed for Georgia, with Colonel Campbell—just about the time that his old regiment was on its march for Virginia, whither Congress had finally determined on sending poor Burgoyne's captive army.

A good while before this, Fred received a letter from Mary Fleming, which put him in very low spirits. Mary expressed herself very kindly, and assured him of her regard, but gave him no hope that this regard would ever become a warmer feeling. Poor Fred felt that Fate was using him very ill, and for about a week was in a decided ill-humour with himself and the world.

CHAPTER LXXIV.

A HERO'S BRIDE.

HAVING got over the shock of finding her penetration so much at fault, Mrs. Maverick reconciled herself to the situation with a philosophy which surprised Althea. But what good woman was ever long obdurate to a love affair? In a shorter time than could have been expected, she summoned Althea to her side, and bade her not toss her head, but give her a kiss and tell her all about it. As she added that, so far as she was personally concerned, she had no reason to lament what would bring her the comfort of having Althea near her in her declining years, she must be considered as having given her consent very handsomely.

The old lady was further mollified by Althea's artfulness in keeping prominently before her the painful dilemma in which Noel's attachment had placed her.

"I behaved very unkindly," she said—hanging her head, and opening and shutting the scissors, which hung from her waist with her pincushion. "I have owned it to Colonel Fleming. But if it had not been for Noel, we must have understood one another long ago. I'm sure a word from Colonel Fleming would have shown me what I felt——"

"Tis my belief, child, as you knew what you felt quite long enough ago to have treated him a deal more kindly than you did, as long ago as when he was in Boston. I wish you'd leave off snapping those scissors!"

"I'm sure, cousin," said Althea, with a relapse into her old spirit, "I should never have expected you to approve of it if I had!"

"Tut, tut! child, you know very well that though treason and rebellion are heinous crimes, they aint of the same disgraceful nature as felony. However bitterly I may regret that poor Myra Branzholm's sons should have took the part they have, they can never cease to be gentlemen—and gentlemen, except in that one deplorable particular, of unblemished honour. I could wish for your own sake you had chose Captain André——"

"Captain André was never in earnest."

"You know very well, child, that he only waited for a word from you to make him so. But I don't know what I should have done without you. If you was unkind to poor Colonel Fleming, you've been like a daughter to me;" here Mrs. Maverick shed tears, and pressed Althea's hand. "After all," she went on presently, "you might do worse—everybody speaks very highly of his abilities; and there's to be an act of indemnity, and in a Judge's gown—he's sure to be made a Judge some day—the loss of his arm would hardly be observed."

Mrs. Maverick was soon called upon for another exercise of her philosophy. Peggy Shippen came in one afternoon, with a countenance so evidently adjusted to provoke question, that Althea could do no less than ask what all these reports meant about General Arnold?

To this Peggy replied (after a decent interval of blushes and hesitation), by admitting that the General had made her an offer—in the most beautiful letter that ever was wrote.

"And what does your father say to it, my dear?" asked Mrs. Maverick—who felt, however, that she had now very little right to blame this falling-off.

"He will let me do as I like, of course," says Peggy pertly. "My aunt says he is too old for me—such silly nonsense! I'm sure he is not old at all—he's only six-and-thirty, and that's quite young for a man. And as for his children, I'm sure I shall love them dearly."

From this latter remark it will be seen that Peggy had seriously considered the General's proposal. She went on to remark how shamefully General Arnold had been treated.

"I hate Congress!" says Peggy, stamping her little foot, and clenching her hands. "Congress has used him infamously! There's only General Washington and General Schuyler that

have showed themselves honourable. As for General Gates, every one knows he is a coward! But Congress is the worst!" Having uttered this sweeping denunciation of the rebel authorities, Peggy descanted more at length on the merits and sufferings of General Arnold, who was evidently in her estimation the greatest as well as the bravest of men; and at last took an affectionate leave of the old lady, who had listened to it all with surprising meekness.

"Oh, Althea, don't you think 'tis lovely being in love?" said Peggy, as the two girls went into the sitting-room for a few moments' more confidential talk. "I used to think 'twas rather silly—but then such silly people paid me compliments. Do tell me, Althea—have you made it up with Major Branhholm?"

It was well for Peggy that she stopped herself, just as she was going to add that she had told General Arnold she was sure Major Branhholm was unhappy, and that the General had observed that he had himself perceived it, but had felt a delicacy about asking the cause.

Althea only replied, rather stiffly, that she had not made it up with the Major, because she was not aware of ever having quarrelled with him.

Mrs. Branhholm was (after Peggy Shippen) the first visitor that Mrs. Maverick saw. The two ladies had not met for several years—not, indeed, since the political troubles began to seriously threaten the peace of the country. But this only gave them the more to talk about. Mrs. Branhholm confided to Mrs. Maverick her perplexities as to how she could best hope to reconcile her sons; and Mrs. Maverick in return assured her that nothing had ever surprised her so much in the whole course of her existence. In one of these conversations, Mrs. Branhholm told her old friend that (before he went to England) it had been her hope that Noel would marry Mary, and that she had returned to this hope when Miss Digby refused him. But, she added, she feared Mary looked with some favour on a young man who was Noel's particular aversion—and who was, she must say, not half good enough for her, though he belonged to a most respectable family, and there was nothing against him. It is hardly necessary to say that this was that relative of Captain Graydon's, who was always engrossing Mary's attention just when Noel most wanted to talk to her himself. As for Mary, she seemed not unwilling to have him

talk to her, but she never allowed him to positively make love—which he was evidently quite ready to do. Mary had, of course, received Captain Digby's letter; but as she had said nothing about it to any one, and Colonel Fleming was discretion itself in such matters, nobody's suspicions pointed that way.

Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence Fleming had removed to Philadelphia, where a part of Mr. Fleming's business lay. The constant disturbances in Boston while the Convention troops were there, and the almost as constant fears of an attack by sea, had determined Mr. Fleming to avail himself of the comparative security of Philadelphia—to which city it was very unlikely the British would ever attempt to return. He took a house accordingly in Pine Street, in which it was said the famous Dr. Christopher Witt had once lived—and in which, if all tales were true, he might yet be met, clad in his long furred gown and pointed cap, and bearing in his hand the ever-burning lamp of the Rosicrucians.

No one, however, was found who professed to have actually beheld Dr. Witt's ghost, and the Flemings had no reason to repent their temerity. Mary, who of course was now with her parents, was observed to be looking a little pale; but she stoutly denied that Dr. Witt had ever intruded upon her and offered to cast her nativity—which was the reason popularly assigned for his posthumous visits.

Mrs. Branzholm and Mary had agreed with Althea that her engagement had better be kept secret for a time, for Noel's sake. This would, they fancied, spare him some of those malapropos comments which there are always to be found persons ready to make. Mary let Noel know this, and he was evidently much relieved to think that he would thus—for a time at least—escape curious looks and impertinent remarks.

Colonel Fleming (who had behaved with great spirit at Monmouth, and been particularly thanked by His Excellency) was most of the autumn at Cambridge, whither he was sent on business connected with the unfortunate death of Lieutenant Brown—shot by a sentinel for persisting in passing the lines—and the quarrel between General Phillips and General Heath which had happened in consequence, and which finally led to the removal of the Convention troops from Boston.

Althea spent the autumn almost in seclusion. There was a good deal of gaiety going on, but her proud spirit chafed at appearing at rebel entertainments. She was engaged to marry

a Colonel in the rebel army, it is true—but that was a different matter altogether. She was not going to marry him, until he should have ceased to be a rebel—that is, until peace should be signed and bygones be bygones. She vexed Peggy Shippen by refusing to go to the grand ball which Governor Arnold gave the French Embassy, and to which all the ladies of the *Mis-chianza* were invited—to the scandal of some of the stiff old Whigs. But there were not young ladies enough in Philadelphia for a round dozen of the prettiest to be left out of the invitations, so they all went and danced their best, in spite of General Reed's chilly looks.

Althea saw Noel not long after his return; but they met in the presence of half-a-dozen people, and the interview was further made easy by Major Branhholm's using the opportunity to give her a letter which had come by the post-rider from Captain Digby, and, like all other letters, had been stopped at the outpost.

Fred's letter contained a very guarded account of events since the army left Philadelphia. Indeed, except as a proof that he was alive and well, it told her considerably less than she and everybody else knew already.

At this interview, Althea perceived a great change in Noel's manner. He was much graver than usual, and somewhat more ceremonious. He seemed to wish to put a distance between them; and Althea felt that he was right.

Althea had long since told Mary very nearly all that there was to tell, and as she did not absolutely swear her friend to secrecy, a considerable portion of the story had been imparted to Noel. He had heard it almost in silence, only saying at the end,—

"I never doubted Jasper's honour; but a wound is a wound, whoever gives it."

As autumn wore on, and the army went into winter quarters at Middlebrook, Mrs. Branhholm resolved to accompany her husband (who had been nearly a month with her in Philadelphia) to the camp. Althea missed her very much, and did not feel that Mrs. Lawrence Fleming's visits, paid and returned, were a compensation. Mrs. Fleming had not yet been informed of Althea's engagement, and the consequent failure of her plans for Jasper, but after a visit to her Althea always went home very despondent, and wishing herself back in England,

until she remembered how little she had there to go back to. After such visits, she generally consoled herself by writing to Jasper—but she was constantly checked by the knowledge that her letter might, and very likely would, be read by other eyes before it reached his, and might perhaps never reach him at all.

About this time, the rancour already existing between the two contending parties assumed an extraordinary and frightful intensity. The slaughter of Wyoming was the first of a long series of partisan massacres, where neighbour fought with neighbour, brother with brother, and even father with son—till hell itself seemed to have broken loose. Walter Butler, whom General Arnold had spared at German Flats, ravaged Cherry Valley. Tories leagued themselves with Indians, and provoked terrible reprisals; while in the Carolinas, Whigs and Tories hung each other on the nearest tree.

A good many people found themselves in an awkward dilemma, after the British army had gone. Those who had rendered themselves particularly obnoxious to the incoming powers, mostly departed with the outgoing ones; but some remained—and against these, bills for treason were sent to the Grand Jury. Many of these bills were thrown out, and of those which came on to be tried, only two resulted in a conviction. It was pretty well known that the great body of the Quakers inclined to the Royal cause—though they usually confined their opposition to the part whereof it is said, "He that is not with us is against us." It was therefore all the greater shock, to see two Quakers brought to the gallows for aiding and abetting the enemy. One of these unlucky persons was that same Roberts who had once rebuked Colonel Fleming's unsanctified zeal. He had been caught trying to enlist recruits for Sir William Howe—and had even strayed so far from the path of non-resistance, as to offer to put himself at the head of a troop of horse, and rescue those Quaker-citizens who, a year ago, had been sent to Virginia, to remove them out of the way of temptation.

In spite of all the efforts made to save him, Roberts was hanged on the Commons; and if it could not be said that he had lived like a Friend, he at least died like a man, and made his dying speech with a coolness worthy of a more consistent career.

With these exceptions, however (and some discontent at the high prices of necessaries), Philadelphia was almost as peaceful

as usual, and much less dull. General Arnold, who had the same house—once Governor Penn's—which Sir William Howe had occupied, kept up a good deal of state. He had entertained the French ambassador and his suite for several days; and there were persons who asked if so much magnificence comported with republican simplicity and a time of distress? These persons also professed themselves scandalised at the court which the General paid to Mr. Shippen—a notorious loyalist, and to Mr. Shippen's daughter—who had flaunted it at the *Mischianza*.

Some of these reports reached the Governor, and highly incensed him.

"Do they expect me to make war on women?" he said angrily to Major Branzholm. "Was you not sick yesterday at Reed's speech against young Will Hamilton? Who would have thought, to hear him, that the virtuous Joseph was once, and not two years ago yet, thinking of making his own peace? I wish to heaven Cadwallader had called *him* out instead of Conway! I'm no friend of Conway's, as you know, nor of any other of General Gates's creatures—but Conway did at least stand before Washington's face to what he'd said behind his back. But Reed has contrived to sail so near the wind, that, but for that damning letter to Lee, we should never have been quite sure he was not a true man."

"That is a hard thing to say, sir, of a man who perhaps at the worst was only guilty of a momentary weakness," observed Noel.

"'Twas no momentary weakness," said the General. "He is one of those of whom 'tis said in Scripture, that they turn aside like a broken bow. And now, forsooth, he says that the King of England is too poor to buy him—and on the wings of that saying will soar to immortality!"

CHAPTER LXXV.

TOBIAS SEES THE NEW YEAR COME TO TOWN.

THE winter set in exceedingly cold, but Mrs. Maverick's health and spirits returned surprisingly as the weather grew more severe—until, as Christmas approached, she was almost herself again. It was a sore trial to her loyalty to be obliged to hear so much of General Arnold, President Reed, and Congress; and

when General Washington came to town in December, it was impossible to walk the streets without (metaphorically speaking, of course) running against a rebel officer. Mrs. Maverick's only consolations were derived from the reflection, that in Boston she must have been still more afflicted by the sight of Burgoyne's unfortunate army, and by the spectacle of a French fleet riding in the Bay—while another terrible fire in New York, and the frequent expectation of an attack, did not make that city a very desirable place of abode. But perhaps the dissensions in Congress, and the accounts of the squabbles among the French Commissioners (who were writing pamphlets and letters against each other as hard as they could), cheered the poor lady still more. Did not Scripture say plainly that a kingdom divided against itself could not stand?

Although, of course, this winter could not pretend to compare with the last, Philadelphia was tolerably gay. It was said, indeed, that General Washington had been much scandalised at the sums of money—sometimes as much as three or four hundred pounds—willingly spent on an assembly or a supper, while the soldiers had not shoes to their feet or shirts to their backs, and the Jersey regiments were clamouring for their pay. He had said that this was not a time for junketing, and had declined to appear at any of these costly entertainments. But, though General Washington could keep an army together on no pay and hardly anything to eat, he could not stop the Philadelphians from giving parties.

It was now the last day of the old year, and Mr. Shippen had invited all his friends to see the old year out. In old Philadelphia, everybody who was anybody knew everybody else, so the day fixed for an entertainment was usually matter of friendly arrangement. This evening, for instance, the Chews had thought of giving a party themselves, but had been persuaded to defer theirs till Twelfth Night. Mr. Justice Chew (who had been banished to his estate in New Jersey a little before the British army entered Philadelphia) had been permitted to return, to the great joy of his family. Mr. Shippen, however, had only a few days ago married his daughter Betsy to Colonel Burd, and this party was to be a sort of wind-up of the marriage-festivities.

Mr. Shippen insisted that Mrs. Maverick should come, and the bride sent word she should take it very unkind if she did not. As there was a deep snow on the ground, Mr. Shippen

sent his own chair for Mrs. Maverick, and Althea, as she gave one last look in her glass, heard the chairmen stamping the snow off their feet at the front door. Althea was in good spirits. Fred had gone south, but he had written that by all accounts they should find more friends than enemies in Georgia and the Carolinas. And Colonel Fleming was expected to pass through town in a very few days—indeed he might arrive at any time. The Convention troops were to be removed to Virginia, and he was to accompany them.

The hope of seeing Jasper so soon brought Althea such a sense of complete rest and peace that—though she was resolved to keep her word—she secretly regretted the necessity of waiting till the war was over, before she could marry him. Many of the officers had their wives with them, even in camp; she could easily have gone to Virginia—

“Pshaw!” cried Althea to her image in the looking-glass, which blushed furiously. “What sort of principles can you have, to think of such a thing? Where’s your patriotism! Think of your brother—fighting for his King this very moment perhaps—and be ashamed of yourself!”

“The chair’s come back—’tis your turn,” said Tobias, tugging at Althea’s brocade to make her attend. “Are you angry because you think you don’t look well?” he added, trying to get a peep in the glass himself. “Because *I* think you look well enough.”

The chairmen whisked Althea round to Fourth Street in a very few minutes, and quite as soon as Mrs. Maverick had fairly shaken out her skirts.

As Althea went up the broad stair of the Shippen House, she could not but remember that the last public entertainment at which she had been present was the splendid festival of the *Mischianza*. The old Shippen House, however, had a sober magnificence of its own, which compensated in Althea’s mind for the greater size and more gaudy decorations of the supper-room at Walnut-Grove.

The rooms were already crowded, and there was quite a throng round the bride and bridegroom. Peggy Chew soon made her way to Althea, and began to talk about the *Mischianza*, and said she wished Captain André could be spirited thither for that one night—just to see how well they could get on without him. “Though, for that matter,” added Miss Chew ingenuously, “I don’t mind owning as I miss the British officers

dreadful. Do you remember Captain André's face, Althea, the night Polly Redman sang *War and Washington*? How he shifted about, not quite sure if he ought to laugh at such a defiance—and then ended by laughing as loud as anybody! But here's my brother Ben, looking as spruce as if he had just stepped down out of a picture-frame, come to ask you to dance."

Mrs. Maverick had vanished — having been instantly disposed of in the card-room by Mr. Shippen, who had not ventured to tell her that General Arnold was to be present, and was glad to get her out of the way of seeing the rebel Governor. Instead of the General, however, Major Branhholm appeared rather late in the evening, with excuses—the General, whose leg obstinately refused to heal, was in more pain than usual, and felt himself too ill to come.

At this, there was a universal expression of sympathy, and Peggy Shippen's eyes filled with tears. She said something in a low voice to the Major, which was probably a message—for Major Branhholm had intimated that the General had desired him to return and sit with him. He whispered to Miss Shippen that the General felt very low, but had particularly enjoined him to wish her from him a Happy New Year—at which Peggy's eyes fairly overflowed, and several of the guests whispered to each other that 'twas pretty clear there would soon be another wedding in that house.

This threw a sort of damper on the company, and to remove it, the host called for a song. In those days, there was a great deal of singing in a simple way in Philadelphia—generally without music—though many of the ladies twanged the guitar. Althea had sung once or twice last winter at Mr. Shippen's and the Chews', and now nothing would do but she must give them one of Dr. Arne's songs from Shakespeare. So she sang *Under the greenwood tree*, accompanying herself on Peggy's guitar, in a way which produced a prodigious effect. Althea's voice was a good mezzo-soprano, with something of a contralto quality about the lower notes; and as she had had the advantage of singing-lessons in Bath, there was a finish in her style which her audience highly appreciated, and preferred even to Mary Fleming's sweet high soprano, as clear as a silver bell, in which she warbled an *aria* of the great Mr. Handel's.

With music and dancing the night wore on, until it was past eleven. The whist-players had left their tables (all but Dr. Chevet and a few of the more inveterate gamesters) and crowded

into the large drawing-room. And just at this moment, Peggy Shippen, who was very much excited, and looked even lovelier than usual, insisted on Althea's singing a little song which she had found one day among her music, and had borrowed to copy. "If you'll sing it, I won't tell 'tis your own composing," whispers Peggy. "Here it is—come, I'm sure you can't have forgot it."

Althea had never intended to sing this particular song in public, but, lest Peggy should proclaim her as its author, she complied without more ado, and playing a few bars of a very simple prelude, began—

"A lady looked from her castle-wall ;
The shadows of eve began to fall
On turret and battlement hoar.
She heard the wind in the cedar trees,
And fancied it murmured words like these—

*' Return, return, from over the seas,
And go to the wars no more !
Return ! Return ! '*

"The stream ran murmuring down the vale ;
On a bush close by the nightingale
His complaint to the moon did pour.
The lady sighed, her heart to ease—
And still she fancied the words were these—

*' Return, return, from over the seas,
And go to the wars no more !
Return ! Return ! '*

"Her lord was gone far over the brine,
To fight for the Cross in Palestine,
And Solyma's towers restore ;
And still she fancied that words like these
Were sung by the brook and the summer breeze—

*' Return, return, from over the seas,
And go to the wars no more !
Return ! Return ! '*

Althea had made this little song long ago in England, when she first thought of following the marching-regiment, to the mortal offence of old Mrs. Theodosia. She sang it now with a great deal of feeling, and let her voice die away very sweetly in the refrain—as though the murmuring brook had indeed taken it up, and was sighing out, "Return ! return !" as it hurried impatiently down the valley. Mary was so engrossed in the song, and in watching Althea, that she did not observe a slight commotion near the card-room door. But as Althea was sing-

ing the last verse—her voice lingering tenderly over the refrain—the door leading to the card-room was pushed a little open, and Mary saw Jasper. Althea saw him too, and faltered in the last "Return," but recovered herself, and played the closing bars. Then she unloosed the guitar-ribbon from her neck—disregarding many entreaties to sing again—and, crossing over to Mary, whispered to her that Jasper was arrived.

He came up as soon as he could get to them—as nearly every one present knew him, this, however, took some time. He had scarcely asked Althea how she did (with a look which asked a good deal more), when the guests all began to crowd down into the hall, for the clocks were on the stroke of midnight. Some of the young men (among them that cousin of Captain Graydon's, whom Noel had lately thought a more consummate coxcomb than ever) ran out in the snow, to listen for the bells of Christ Church. It was not very light in the hall, and no one but Mary noticed that Colonel Fleming held Miss Digby's hand, all the while the bells were ringing the Old Year out and the New Year in. And what was more natural than that the Colonel should escort Miss Digby home? The chairmen had enough to do; and the snow was crisp and dry. It was also perfectly natural that Tobias should wish to see the New Year arrive, and that his mother should tell him he would have a whole twelvemonth to see it in, and send him off to bed at his usual hour—and also that he should, in spite of a determination to keep awake, fall fast asleep, and only be wakened by the chairmen who brought Mrs. Maverick home violently ringing the bell. Thinking that this might be the New Year, Tobias jumped instantly out of bed, got on the chair by the window, and thence on to the table—in his haste knocking over a small swing-glass which stood on it. Luckily the glass only fell on its back and was not broken, but Tobias thought the noise would bring some one, and listened anxiously; but no one came, and he took courage to open the window. It was very cold, and Tobias's teeth presently began to chatter furiously; but he could see everything that was going on down below—even the deep holes in the snow made by the chairmen's feet. They were just bringing the chair down the steps, having, no doubt, carried Mrs. Maverick or Miss Digby—whichever it was they had brought—into the passage. Once down the steps, they hitched their hands to the ends of the poles, and set off at

a run with the empty chair, as if it had been a pumpkin. Tobias knew the chair again—it was the yellow one. He watched them to the corner, and then was just going to draw in his head (as the air was uncommonly sharp), when he saw a lady and gentleman coming along on the other side of the street. He instantly recognised the lady by her muffler and hood—it was Miss Digby; and the gentleman, no doubt, was Major Branzholm, for he wore a cocked hat, and Tobias could see his sword sticking out from under his cloak.

The sky was clear, and the moon, though past the full, shone very bright. Tobias could see that both Miss Digby's hands were clasped over the gentleman's arm, and that she was looking in his face. He had heard Miss Digby discussed in the kitchen in connection with Major Branzholm. His curiosity had been tremendously excited by the mystery which Betty Cook threw around love affairs in general, and the mixture of lofty contempt and secret gloating with which he had seen her listen to the whispered confidences of her own female friends. Tobias had heard much of love-making, but had seen little. So far as his own observation had yet gone, the operation appeared to chiefly consist of a box on the ear. This primitive method of making love was, however, vastly entertaining to witness, and Tobias cautiously put out his head a little farther, so as to lose none of it, in case there should be any.

Miss Digby and the gentleman were now crossing the street; the gentleman's head was slightly bent, and his hat so shadowed his face that Tobias could not make out his features, but the moon shone full in Miss Digby's face—it was she, beyond a doubt. The gentleman seemed to say something, at which Miss Digby stroked his hand—so, at least, the action appeared to Tobias. It certainly did not look like a slap. But more was to come.

Miss Digby and her cavalier made straight for the house and mounted the steps, but, once arrived there, Miss Digby did not open the door and go in, as Tobias of course expected she would do. On the contrary, she stood there talking to the gentleman—while Tobias's teeth rattled in his jaws, and his fingers, as he held on by the window-sill, ached with cold. Tobias could only hear a murmur of voices, but he could see the speakers very well; and presently he saw the gentleman take off his hat—upon which, to his inexpressible amazement, Tobias discovered that it was not Major Branzholm, who was

very dark, while this gentleman seemed to be rather fair. Scarcely had he made this discovery, when he was subjected to a second surprise. The gentleman kissed Miss Digby—and instead of boxing his ears (as Betty Cook did the other day to the barber's boy), or screaming and running away, she stood perfectly still, and allowed him to do it again!

At the risk of his neck, Tobias craned out another inch. Yes! he was kissing her again; and instead of pushing him down the steps—as, for an instant, Tobias thought she was going to do—she laid her hands on his shoulders, and presently slipped one arm round his neck, and laid down her head on his breast!

At this spectacle, all sorts of wild and contradictory thoughts rushed pell-mell into Tobias's mind. If Betty Cook had boxed the ears of the barber's boy once, she had done it a dozen times; only the other day there had been a grand tussle, in which a chair had been upset, and the barber's boy had only just managed to snatch a kiss, after spilling his flour-bag all over Betty's back and tearing her gown. Was Betty a hypocrite? And was the barber's boy in league with her? Betty always said Miss Digby was a proud madam—why, then, did she not box the stranger's ears? Had not Betty once told him, in answer to his question as to why she boxed the barber's boy, that she did it out of a proper pride?

At last, they seemed to say good-night. Miss Digby opened the door, and a pale gleam from the candle in the passage fell out on the snow. Miss Digby cried, "Good-night!" the gentleman bowed very politely, and, after standing still a moment in the middle of the road, walked quickly away in the opposite direction to that in which he had come. Tobias watched him as long as he was in sight, and then, closing the window, crept back to bed, chilled to his very marrow, perplexed in the inmost recesses of his soul, but so triumphant at his adventure, that he quite forgot all about the New Year, until next morning.

CHAPTER LXXVI.

IN WHICH TOBIAS RECEIVES A SHOCK TO HIS MORALS.

MRS. MAVERICK observed at breakfast-time, that she should not wonder but what Colonel Fleming would call before dinner,

and they had best be ready. Now that she actually lived in a city governed by rebel authorities, Mrs. Maverick yielded to circumstances so far as to give Mr. Fleming his military rank in speaking of him.

The Colonel made his appearance a very long while before dinner; it was, in fact, not so very long after breakfast. He brought a pressing invitation for the ladies to return and dine with his uncle and aunt. Mrs. Maverick was expecting two old friends of her own to dinner, but she instantly accepted the invitation for Althea, without so much as asking her whether she chose to go.

"I suppose you know, Colonel Fleming," she said, fixing her bright eyes on Jasper in a very embarrassing manner, "that Althea has confided to me the march you have stole on us?"

"Really, my dear Madam, I do not think my conduct deserves so hard a name," said Jasper, in a tone of remonstrance. Mrs. Maverick shook her head and her finger at him.

"I think," she said, still transfixing him—her eyes were still a most effective pair of weapons, and must have been irresistible in her youth—"that you have, both of you, been monstrous sly. All's fair, they say, in love and war; but I, for one, was completely deceived. If you had asked me if I thought you was indifferent to Althea, I should have told you I believed she had a particular antipathy towards you."

To this the Colonel gravely replied that such had long been his own opinion.

"Though why, if 'twas not so," continued the old lady, looking amazingly sagacious, "she behaved to you as she did—or why, if 'twas so—as, in spite of everything she says, I'm inclined to believe—she changed her opinion of you so completely, is more nor I can fathom."

"I think, Madam," said Jasper, with a sly glance at Althea, who blushed furiously, "that she took me on the same principle as that on which the ancient Romans at last accepted the Sibylline Books."

"Ah, now you're classical, Colonel, I can't follow you," observed Mrs. Maverick. "I'm sure, Althea, I don't know why you laugh. Well, I have some little matters to attend to, and will leave you for a few minutes. I suppose nobody dines before two o'clock to-day."

As soon as Mrs. Maverick had thus considerably left the

lovers alone, Jasper drew his chair close to Althea's, and, taking her hand, said,—

"'Tis indeed happiness, Althea, to begin this New Year with you."

She smiled, but sighed next moment, as she asked anxiously, "Have you seen Noel yet? Will he be at your uncle's to-day?"

"He sent word he must be in attendance on General Arnold till five or six o'clock this evening."

Then, seeing that Althea looked much troubled, he exclaimed almost angrily—"What can I do? I have not wronged him! I never wooed you—I allowed you, as I believed, to detest me—for his sake! I've wrote to him, and he has not replied. What more can I do or say? I cannot ask his pardon for being beloved by you—though, by Heaven! I love him so, that I'm almost ready to do it! I wrote him what I thought must move him, but he has not answered by so much as a single word! I've done no wrong; I cannot abase myself before him! And other satisfaction is out of the question between brothers."

Jasper was impatiently walking about the room as he said this. Just as he mentioned "satisfaction," his sword fell down with a clash by the table, against which he had propped it when he laid it aside. Althea turned pale.

"*Absit omen!*" he said almost lightly, as he picked up the sword. "Do not be afraid, I shall never draw it against Noel. I should not have said what I did—I've not the least reason to suppose so mad an idea ever crossed the boy's mind. But this silence is so strange—so unlike him. And until we are reconciled, even you cannot make me completely happy. Does that seem cold and unkind, Althea?"

Jasper accompanied this question with so tender an embrace, that a more exacting mistress could hardly have thought him cold.

"No!" she said, with a generous passion which brought back the colour to her cheeks; "you would be less than I think you if you felt otherwise. I can rise higher than you think—I can honour your motives, when I most regret your conclusions. I should be base indeed, if I could be insensible to a quarrel of which I am the unhappy cause. I sometimes wonder, Jasper, that you don't hate me—I've brought you nothing but pain. I'm justly punished for all my wicked pride——"

But Jasper would not let her reproach herself—fate was, he declared, at least as much to blame as she—indeed, he would not hear of her being to blame at all. The kinder she had shown herself, the harder would she have made his own task.

"Though, after all," he said, looking at her with great tenderness, "your unkindness only showed itself in words; I remember a thousand kind actions to set against them. And 'twas I that provoked your unkindness half the time; but I did it, because I durst not trust myself. But 'twas of no use—there was ever such a magnanimity about you as left me more hopelessly in love than ever—even when you'd just hurt me most."

"And now," she said, the tears in her eyes, "when I would if I could make up for it all, I am come between you and Noel. But 'tis a judgement on me!"

"If we could but meet, I'm certain 'twould all be well," said Jasper. "And I do not believe he will let to-day pass without seeing me."

As nothing could make Mrs. Maverick forget to be hospitable, she reappeared after a reasonable interval, with some hot metheglin, which Colonel Fleming was compelled to swallow. This comparatively trifling circumstance would not have been mentioned, but for the extraordinary conduct of Tobias, who had earnestly entreated to be allowed to carry the cake-basket. A cloak which Tobias had just beheld in the hall had vividly reminded him of a most interesting episode, of which he had been an unsuspected witness the night before. Furthermore, the first objects which he noticed on entering the parlour were a cocked hat and a sword—the next was Colonel Fleming, standing with his back to the stove, and looking down on Miss Digby, who was sitting quite near, and looking up at him in return, as composed as possible. Although Tobias had been able to make out that Miss Digby's audacious cavalier was not Major Branhholm (as it ought to have been), he would not have recognised him in the Colonel but for these adjuncts. As it was, the law of association of ideas instantly suggested to him that the mysterious stranger had worn a laced hat, a cloak, and a sword, and—being entirely ignorant of what a *non sequitur* is—he instantly jumped to the conclusion that this could be no other than the mysterious stranger himself.

The effect of this conclusion on Tobias was so marked that

it attracted everybody's attention. He advanced very slowly towards the Colonel, with eyes as round as marbles, and a mouth which he had opened in the first moment of surprise and forgotten to shut again—mechanically extending the cake-basket the while, but with so little discrimination, that Mrs. Maverick thought he would thrust it bodily into the stove.

"Bless me, what is the child about?" she exclaimed, seizing Tobias by the collar, and taking the cake-basket out of his hand. Tobias (who was evidently labouring under a severe cold in the head) continued to gaze at the Colonel with watery eyes, in which the prevailing expression was sheer amazement—nor could even the Colonel's presenting him with half a silver dollar permanently distract his attention.

Tobias remembered perfectly well having seen Colonel Fleming just before the Britishers went away. He had then been deeply, not to say solemnly, impressed by the fact (as narrated with a dreadful zest by Betty Cook, who took the phrase in its literal sense) that the Colonel had had his arm shot off by a cannon-ball in the wars. But the interest which Tobias now felt in him was hardly less thrilling, if more domestic, in its nature. He had reason to believe that Miss Digby (for whom he cherished a romantic but Platonic admiration himself) was in love with Colonel Fleming, instead of—as everybody else believed—with Major Branzholm.

Being a strictly brought-up little boy, Tobias's morals suffered a distinct deterioration in consequence of this discovery; he began from that very day to entertain insidious doubts on the whole subject of love-making, and especially on that particular article of the code on which Betty Cook was so fond of insisting—to wit, that a blow was the proper return for a kiss. Colonel Fleming—invested with the awful dignity of a uniform, and the yet more fearful fascination of having come into actual personal collision with cannon-balls, with a pervading atmosphere of gun-powder about him, and his sword lying on the table, ready to administer martial law—was of course not to be compared too closely with the barber's boy—yet Tobias had heard Betty mysteriously remark, *apropos* of nothing, that if it came to that, we was all much alike. The Dutch mind is somewhat slow; but by the time Tobias was seventeen, he had deduced from all these premises the astounding conclusion, that Miss Digby had been rather pleased than otherwise that Colonel Fleming had kissed her—on the strength of which theory, he

kissed three girls in a single week, and had his ears soundly boxed by two of them for his pains. This is a digression, and is merely inserted here by way of a warning to lovers to remember that there are attic-windows, and to kiss round the corner.

Meanwhile, Tobias firmly closed one fist upon the Colonel's present, and continued to regard him with solemn attention. Miss Digby (who was much amused) got up from her chair for a moment, and, laying her hand on the Colonel's arm, whispered something in his ear, at which he laughed, and looked at Tobias.

"Come here, Tobias," he said, sitting down next to Miss Digby; "come and tell me how old you are."

Tobias mechanically advanced—so astonished at seeing Miss Digby on these affectionate terms with a gentleman who had presumed to kiss her no longer ago than last night, that he did not look where he was going, and, tripping over Colonel Fleming's foot, would have lost his balance altogether, had not the Colonel caught him and propped him up against his knee.

"He really is a most awkward child," observed Mrs. Maverick. "One day, while I was sick, he fell downstairs—all from not looking where he was going—and frightened me nearly to pieces."

"Well, how old are you, Tobias?" asks the Colonel. By this time, Tobias had steadied himself, and was gazing intently at the Colonel's empty sleeve, which he wore neatly fastened to a button of his coat.

"I'm nine—I mean I'm ten," he replied—wondering how a cannon-ball felt, and thinking with some disappointment that the Colonel did not look any fiercer than other people. "Leastways, it's next 'ear now, aint it?" he added, looking up boldly into the Colonel's face, having suddenly got over his constitutional diffidence.

"That is a difficult question, Tobias," answered the Colonel, with a gravity which did not prevent Tobias from perceiving that he was being made fun of somehow or other. "Doctors differ upon it. But if you were to be ten next year, this is the year you mean."

"Then I'm ten," said Tobias with decision, feeling at least an inch taller. Then a happy idea struck him, and he asked confidentially,—

"Did you see the Noo 'ear come in?"

Colonel Fleming replied that he did.

"Did you ever see him afore?" asked Tobias.

"Never so well as last night," replied the Colonel gravely. Miss Digby went very red.

"What was he like?" asked Tobias, his now unabashed gaze roving from the Colonel to Miss Digby, and back again from Miss Digby to the Colonel, in a way calculated to disconcert nervous persons.

"He was like a traveller," said Miss Digby, entering into the jest—perhaps to cover a little confusion. "He was all muffled up in a great cloak, with snow on it—and his hat came down over his eyes, so that you could not see what his face was like——"

"Was it a laced hat?" asked Tobias, his eyes growing rounder than ever. "Had he got a sword?" As he asked this latter question, Tobias glanced at Colonel Fleming's own sword, as it lay on the table.

"I'll be bound he had," said Mrs. Maverick, who believed, good lady, that she was helping bamboozle Tobias. "A sword very like that one you see."

But Tobias did not pay much attention to Mrs. Maverick—he knew she had come home first, and he did not believe she had seen the mysterious arrival at all. He shook the Colonel gently by the knee to make him listen—he was looking at Miss Digby, and they both seemed to be laughing at something.

"Do Noo 'ears ever have anybody with 'em?" he asked, when he thus gained the Colonel's attention. "Any ladies?"

"The little imp!" thought Miss Digby. But Tobias put his question in all good faith; he was by this time half-persuaded that it might have been the New Year after all, and only desired a little further proof.

The Colonel replied that he had never heard of such a thing, but it might be so for all that; new things happen every day, and philosophers teach us that nothing is impossible—

At this moment, Tobias was still further perplexed, by observing on Colonel Fleming's little finger a ring which he was positive Miss Digby used to wear before the Britishers went away.

"I think," says Miss Digby hastily—perceiving several other questions lurking in Tobias's eye—"that 'tis time I got ready. We must not keep Mr. and Mrs. Fleming waiting dinner—that is, if I am to go, cousin——"

"Of course you are to go, my dear," says Mrs. Maverick. "Phœbe will help you dress, if you like to call her—I will

entertain Colonel Fleming till you are ready. You had better take Tobias away with you, he is getting troublesome." Miss Digby accordingly led Tobias to the door (he had to be forcibly detached from the Colonel's knee, and was very loth to depart), and saw him safe on his journey down to his mother. She was a remarkably short time getting ready, and she came out of her room so quickly, that she very nearly knocked down Tobias, who had crept softly up again to waylay her.

"I wanted to arst you something," he said—his thumb in his mouth, and his head apparently glued to his right shoulder—in answer to Althea's demand of what he was doing there.

Being slightly embarrassed, Tobias hereupon thrust his thumb a little too far down his throat, and very nearly swallowed it.

"Well—what is it? Be quick, Tobias! I'm going out to dinner," says Althea, drawing on her glove.

"Was it Colonel Fleming as kissed you last night?" asked Tobias with do-or-die desperation in his tone. "I promise you I won't tell Betty Cook, if you'll only tell me. I don't b'lieve 'twas the Noo 'ear—though they said as he'd come at twelve o'clock. Was it Colonel Fleming? and why wasn't you angry with him?" Tobias gasped for breath—he had never spoken so fast in his life.

"Tobias," replied Miss Digby, with severe serenity, "little boys should never ask questions—that is, improper questions, about things they don't understand. I'm not angry with you," for Tobias seemed about to burst into tears; "but I've no time to talk to you now—I can't keep Colonel Fleming waiting." So saying, she stooped and kissed him—much more kindly than the imp deserved—and ran down to tell the Colonel she was ready. Tobias watched them (from Miss Digby's window) till they were out of sight; they were talking to each other all the way—evidently, Betty Cook's philosophy would not hold water. Tobias sadly concluded that he must reconstruct his universe.

Mr. Fleming (who did not look a day older) received Althea very affectionately, and requested permission to salute her—to accomplish which, however, he had to raise himself on tiptoe. Mrs. Fleming was equally kind in her own way—indeed, the manner in which her husband and daughter had taken the announcement, had surprised her into at least a temporary

acquiescence; but as she considered it a religious obligation to take a serious view of all human affairs, it was with an audible sigh that she wished Miss Digby a Happy New Year—"As happy, that is," she explained, lest this conventional phrase should sound too frivolous, "as we can expect."

Mary informed Althea, while she was divesting herself of her walking attire, that Noel had been asked to meet his brother, but had excused himself—on the plea of its being impossible for any of the General's family to be absent on New Year's Day.

"I have no doubt that is the truth," said Althea. But Mary replied that he could at least have snatched an hour to come and see Jasper, and that she thought this sullen silence very unkind and very unlike him, and added that it made her very unhappy.

"'Twill come right, dearest Mary, 'twill come right," said Althea, embracing her affectionately. "Noel is too generous himself to resist Jasper's appeal to him much longer."

"He has let six months go by," said Mary, very sorrowfully.

"You must pardon the informality of the invitation, my dear," said Mr. Fleming, when Althea came into the dining-parlour—where, however, no one ever did dine, even on New Year's Day, and which was always kept as a company-room. "It was only last night Jasper informed us of his good fortune—and I said instantly, 'Then she and Mrs. Maverick must come and eat their New Year's dinner with us!' He'd have told me before," he whispered mysteriously, "but I daresay as you can guess——" The old gentleman—who was dressed for the occasion in a claret-coloured velvet coat, with a canary waistcoat and claret continuations, in which costume he much resembled a yellow-breasted bird—glanced round to see where Jasper was, observed mysteriously that they had agreed not to say anything about it, and proceeded to descant on Jasper's merits, to which Miss Digby listened with much sweetness. Indeed, her whole bearing was so gentle and yielding that Fred would have beheld her with nearly as much bewilderment as the apparition of Colonel Fleming had lately produced in Tobias.

"Even you, my dear, cannot know all he is," said the old gentleman confidentially to Althea, in a pause between the courses. And Althea won his heart for ever, by replying that she hoped to have a long time in which to learn it.

"Ah, my dear, I trust you may—I trust you may!" he said, patting her hand—she sat between him and Jasper. "But these are sad times, sad times! When I heard he was dead, I thought my heart would have broke." Here Mr. Fleming looked at Jasper, and shook his head. "Don't let him hear we're talking about him," he whispered, "he don't like it. Some other time, when he aint by——"

But Jasper, who had observed a good deal of pantomimic communication being carried on, here interposed. He was afraid that Noel was the subject of conversation. "My dear father," he said, "you promised me that only cheerful subjects should be talked of to-day. I don't want to know what you have been saying—whatever it is, it has brought the tears to both your eyes. I am sure you was going to drink Althea's health——"

"To be sure, to be sure, my dear Jasper," cries the old gentleman, instantly filling his glass. "But we wasn't talking of the subjects you said wasn't to be mentioned. My dear, pass the bottle to Jasper."

Mr. Fleming proposed Althea's health in a very neat set speech; and for the remainder of dinner-time contented himself with exchanging nods and winks of intelligence with her.

After dinner—which went off very cheerfully upon the whole—although Mrs. Fleming unnecessarily reminded the company that they might not all be spared to see another New Year's Day, and Mary could not help listening for Noel—they returned to the state-apartment.

"We'd a deal better have stopped below!" cried Mr. Fleming, violently attacking the stove-fire with the poker. "I hate a company-room, it always gives me cold. Your mother would have us come up here, in honour of Miss Althea—who I'm sure has more sense nor to like to sit shivering in a company-room, when she might stop in a comfortable parlour. For my part, Jasper, if Dr. Witt was such a conjurer as they say he was, I wonder he didn't invent a better stove nor this, which roasts you in front all the while you're freezing behind. I'll have a Franklin put in—Dr. Franklin has more common sense in his little finger, nor most folks have gotten in their whole bodies—present company of course excepted."

This conventional disclaimer notwithstanding, this speech with the reference to Dr. Franklin, was, I regret to say, intended as a dig at Mrs. Fleming, for having insisted on sitting

upstairs in state; and it drew a remark from that excellent lady to the effect that common-sense might be very well in its proper place (which might or might not be a fireplace), but that in many more important matters Dr. Franklin was very far indeed from being infallible.

CHAPTER LXXVII.

ON THE ROAD TO GERMANTOWN.

GENERAL ARNOLD was not much in the habit of talking of his future plans. Even with Major Branzholm (popularly believed to be in his confidence) he seldom discussed anything but the matter immediately in hand.

On New Year's Eve, however, he was in an unusually open mood. Having minutely inquired as to how Peggy had received his message, he launched out into abuse, pretty evenly distributed between Congress and the Executive Council of Pennsylvania. The injustice, the meddling, the base ingratitude of Congress, were themes on which the General had often enlarged before; but it is only just to say that his indignation was not alone excited by his own wrongs. In spite of all his efforts to move Congress, the orphan children of Dr. Warren were still unprovided for, and Congress was permitting the lady who was to have been their second mother to bring them up at her own expense—assisted more than once by General Arnold himself—while it heaped honours on needy foreign adventurers, who had come to fish in troubled waters. One had only to plot against Washington, to be instantly made a Major-General, continued the General; and as for the Executive Council of Pennsylvania, the only part of its business which it thoroughly understood, was how to thwart and hamper the military authorities—to which, in the very nature of things, it ought to be subordinate.

This supremacy of the military authority was so sore a point, that Noel was relieved when the General, growing less angry but more despondent, began to talk of his wound, and of the helpless condition to which it reduced him.

"I am a useless log," he groaned, "I cannot so much as mount a horse. I have been thinking whether 'twould not be best to make a grace of necessity. I've thought, if I could

get a grant of land somewhere in the west of New York, I might establish a settlement there. There are many broken-down soldiers as have served under me, that I think would gladly go with me. I might live like Schuyler—a patriarch with flocks and herds. I think I might there retrieve my broken fortunes, and heal me of my wounds, and be able to snap my fingers at Congress and the Council. You saw Schuyler's life; how do you think 'twould suit me?"

"I think, sir," said Noel, "that if the country was not much settled, and you had everything to do, you might find a field for your powers. But when once you had consolidated your kingdom—for what you mean to do would be no less—I fear, you would sit down and weep like Alexander."

"By heaven! you are a shrewder fellow than I took you for!" exclaimed the General, laughing. "But 'tis, I think, worth considering of; it offers me an honourable retreat. And when I had once started the thing, I could at any time, if I wished it, leave a viceroy in command."

He talked of this project till past midnight; and then, wishing Noel a Happy New Year, dismissed him, in a better humour than he had been in for several days.

So many persons came to pay their respects to the Governor on New Year's Day, that it was afternoon before he could go (as he insisted on doing, though he was still in much pain) to pay his own to General Washington. By this time, Noel had heard from Mr. Shippen that his brother was in town—only, as it seemed, for a single day, on his way to Lancaster and Charlottesville.

This information threw Noel into a great state of agitation. He had, ever since he could remember anything, looked up to his elder brother with so much love and admiration that any other feelings appeared shocking and monstrous. He tried to imagine himself meeting Jasper as man to man, and saying to him,—“She has decided between us. I do not accuse you of betraying me, but I can never see you with her; let us henceforth be strangers.” But he could not; it was easier to imagine himself uttering reproaches, and accusing Jasper of having availed himself of the kindness shown him in Boston for his brother's sake, to win the heart of that brother's mistress.

“If I say that, he'll never forgive me,” thought Noel; “and 'twill be better he should not.” But at this thought so terrible a pain wrung Noel's heart that he cried aloud,—“No

—I cannot say it! and I must not see him, lest I should say it unawares!”

Wilder thoughts still took hold of him—thoughts of sending Jasper a mortal defiance—not that he even dreamed of lifting his hand against his brother, but that in the distortion of all his ideas he fancied he saw here a way of escape from the pent-up anguish of the last six months.

“We could fight with pistols,” he thought, staring gloomily into the fire. “He’s a good shot. Of course, I should take care not even to load mine. I could make that all right with my second; and if Jasper put a bullet through my heart, I should be much obliged to him. I’d forgive him then—I should have had my revenge.”

Noel found considerable comfort in contemplating this diabolical picture—only dashed by the secret conviction that (supposing Jasper could ever be goaded into a meeting) he would most likely not load his own pistols either—“or fire ’em off in the air, and make a fool of me,” thought Noel, going to the window—he was in his own room—and looking down into the street. “I wonder he don’t write, if he’s too proud to come,” he thought, with a sudden change of mood. “After all, he’s got so much the best of it, that I don’t see as he ought to wait for me to make all the advances.”

The cold air may have contributed to bring Noel into this cooler temper. At any rate, he shut the window with a sigh, and went back to the fire in a wholesome revulsion of shame, at the thought of the horror which his mother and Mary would feel, if they ever knew that he had for a single instant entertained such an idea as challenging his brother. “They’d never believe that I only wanted him to kill me,” he thought, bursting into tears. His father, too, who had often said that the family broils of the Braxholms and the Butlers were a disgrace to their names!

As Noel recovered some degree of calmness, he told himself that he would leave it to chance; perhaps he should meet Jasper without seeking him—or perhaps Jasper would come to him.

In the midst of these debates, Major Clarkson, one of the aides, came to say that the General was ready to go and wait upon His Excellency. Noel followed, with a very uneasy—was it heart or conscience, or both? It was by no means unlikely that he might come face to face with Jasper in the very presence of His Excellency; and if he did, of course he must greet

him. Yet how could he give his hand to his brother with so much soreness rankling in his heart?

But Jasper was not there, and Noel was at once unspeakably relieved, and infinitely disappointed. It would have been so much easier to get their first encounter over in public. As they were returning, the General asked him if he was ill?

"I doubt you caught a cold, sitting up so late with me last night," he said good-naturedly. "You Virginians don't love frost and snow—though I should scarce say so to one who went with me to Quebec!"

As soon as he was released from attendance, Noel renewed the battle with himself in which he had been all day engaged. In the depths of his heart, he longed for reconciliation, and believed that Jasper longed for it too. He once more read Jasper's letter—that letter which he had never answered. Some time afterwards Jasper had written a second letter; it was very brief, and in it he had merely said, that he believed if Noel knew how much grief his silence was causing him, he would not continue in it.

"Why don't he come?" thought Noel; "if I could see him without Althea, 'twould be so much easier!"

The thought of Althea—lost to him for ever, and yet for ever so near him—had from the first been one of intolerable anguish. It would have been less hard to lose her, he fancied, if at Valley Forge Jasper had confessed the truth. "I would have bidden him go and try his fortune," he said to himself. "'Tis strange he never suspected she loved him; I never imagined she'd more than a sisterly kindness for me, though, to the last, I hoped to turn it into something more. He has stood strangely aloof ever since; he should have compelled me to be reconciled to him; he must know I desire it, but don't know how to set about it."

Noel finally determined to force himself to what was at once the simplest and the most difficult thing he could do. He had been glad to be obliged to decline Mr. Fleming's invitation to dinner, but he began to think that this might have been the easiest solution. He now resolved to go round to Pine Street, and wish them all a Happy New Year. It would be easy to avoid seeing Jasper alone; he need stay but a few moments. But he would have once more pressed his brother's hand in kindness, and the first most embarrassing interview would be over. If, as was possible, Jasper should be gone to

Mrs. Maverick's, he would at least have done his part. But he felt the old tumult in his heart, at the thought that Jasper might at that very moment be at Althea's side, and he hurried past the house with a bitter sense of being shut out.

This most unreasonable feeling had not ceased rankling, when he approached the Flemings' house in Pine Street. The windows of the first storey were lighted ; and in the clear cold air he could distinctly hear the notes of a guitar, and Althea's voice singing to it. He recognised it instantly, and he could distinguish nearly every word of the song—

“Return, return from over the seas,
And go to the wars no more !
Return, return !”

She ceased, but Noel still waited—the pangs of despised love gnawing more fiercely at his heart than ever. She was there—singing love-songs to Jasper, while he, forgotten and alone, listened outside in the snow. Just then, he heard Mary's full sweet voice strike up in his own favourite song ; she had often sung it for him in happier days, when rejected love had been as much a luxury as a pain—

“My lodging is on the cold ground,
And hard, very hard, is my fare ;
But that which grieves me more
Is the coldness of my dear.”

Noel would have cast himself down then and there in the snow, but for a sense that it would be unmanly in a soldier. The next moment he turned and fled—with all the Furies of jealousy behind him—and hurried away, not knowing whither he went, but instinctively making for the open country-roads.

He never could remember where he went—he seemed to be wandering for hours through the snow. The moon was not yet up, but the snow cast a dim and chilly gleam. The snow was deep ; Noel trampled it down savagely—hurrying on, till he was breathless and almost exhausted with his own fierce passion, and the effort of rapid motion in the frosty atmosphere. So he fled, trying to escape his own thoughts (alas ! they were as swift as he), until, plunging into a deeper drift than usual, he stumbled and fell in the snow.

The shock recalled him to time and place. He got up and looked about him, and saw that he was far on the road to Germantown. Scarcely a stone's throw beyond, he saw a light

in a window, and other lights here and there traced the long line of the single street. In the intense stillness he heard a dog bark at the farther end of the town, and then all again was still.

Noel could not have found himself here at any time, without thinking of that foggy autumn morning (scarcely fifteen months ago), when these fields had quaked at the thunder of battle, and been trampled by armed men. But now, alone, long after nightfall, with the death-like desolation of the snow spreading all around, and a distorted blood-red moon just rising, he was seized with a sort of supernatural horror. The trees, their leafless branches wrapped in snow, seemed like the ghosts of dead soldiers risen in their winding-sheets. They seemed to his excited fancy to rebuke him—to ask him what he did there above their graves? and to remind him that here his brother had fought and bled—that brother against whom he had been cherishing angry thoughts so long. If only Jasper were there, he thought, how easy it would be now to fall on his neck, and forget everything but that they were brothers! It seemed to him that he had committed an act of sacrilege in coming here with strife in his heart. All the superstitious tales he had ever heard thronged into his mind. The air seemed thick with invisible presences. Suddenly, a brilliant meteor rushed across the sky, leaving a trail of light behind it, and falling over Philadelphia.

But though Noel saw all this with a thrill of awe, he saw Jasper's face more clearly still—not triumphant or joyous, but with that look in the eyes which had so often perplexed him at Valley Forge—as though Jasper had ceased to expect anything. It went with him all the way back to Philadelphia—where he did not arrive till near midnight, and it haunted him all night long—so vividly, that he started out of an uneasy slumber, imagining he saw his brother sitting by the dying embers of the fire. As the mists of sleep cleared from his eyes, he saw that it was only his own cloak which he had thrown on the back of a chair, but the haunting presence could not be reasoned away.

CHAPTER LXXVIII.

A BROTHER OFFENDED.

"To be wroth with one we love
Doth work like madness in the brain ;"

and there is no need to seek any further explanation of Noel's fancy than an uneasy mind. Jasper, however, had actually been in his brother's room. He had waited for him nearly two hours, and when he went away had left a message to the effect that he was to start for Lancaster next morning.

Finding that Noel made no sign, Jasper had resolved to go and see him.

"I have waited long enough," he said to Althea, as he took her home. "I cannot endure this silence any longer. 'Tis terrible—'tis like death—but, forgive me, my dearest, for saying so to you."

"Nay," she said. "Do you think I don't feel it? I had thought of begging him to come to me, and perhaps letting him meet you too—but I dared not. 'Tis better, I'm sure, that you and he should have no go-between."

Jasper, as he watched the embers on his brother's hearth, did not see so very much more agreeable a prospect there than Noel himself had found in looking over the ghostly fields of Germantown. Noel's avoidance of him could mean but one thing; and as Jasper tried to imagine a future with Noel estranged, not even the memory of Althea's tenderness to him that day could lift the weight from his heart.

He had prepared himself for some violent scenes—for furious reproaches—even for cruel accusations. He thought he could have borne them all better than this absolute silence.

"If he wants to be revenged on me," thought Jasper, "he has found out how to do it. If he had wronged me, I could have compelled him to hear me. I've not wronged him intentionally, God knows—but 'tis as though I had; and being so blest as to have won Althea, I cannot insist on his forgiving me for it! Yet, oh, my God! how shall I endure it, if we are to be at variance?"

Jasper set down Noel's silence to simple resentment—a resentment too deep for words.

"As we are brothers, he cannot call me out," he thought

bitterly ; "so he takes this way—a thousand times crueller, though not so wicked in the world's eyes—to let me know what he would do, were it any other man."

Many times, during that hour of waiting, had Jasper imagined he heard his brother's step approaching, and nerved himself for the meeting ; and after each disappointment his heart misgave him more and more. He believed that Noel was in the house, and had denied himself to him. The servant who had opened the door had said at first that Major Branhholm was at home, and had afterwards pretended (as Jasper unjustly suspected) to discover that he had gone out again—Jasper fancied the man had looked at him curiously as he said it. As this idea took root in Jasper's mind, it caused him the acutest pain—mingled, as the time wore on, with some anger.

"He will let me, I suppose, wait till I am tired, and then I may go away," he thought, kicking a falling log into its place with unnecessary vehemence. "He treats me as if I was a wretch so vile that he will not even send me a message ! If he thinks I have wronged him, let him accuse me of it to my face ! I am in the ridiculous position of not knowing on what terms we are to be. However, I'll not force myself upon him !"

But in spite of this momentary resentment, Jasper went away exceedingly sorrowful. He found Mary still up. She was sitting by the fire in the parlour.

"Well ?" she said eagerly, as he came in—nobody locked his street-door in Philadelphia in the good old times. "You've been a long while gone." Mary was pale—as pale as Jasper himself.

"I have not seen him," he said sadly. "I fear—I greatly fear, Mary, that he denied himself to me."

Then seeing Mary's look of distress and dismay, he kissed her very tenderly.

"Poor girl," he said, "you did not expect this, nor did I. How unlike him is this cold resentment ! His very nature is changed. Mary, I can never forgive myself for having been the cause of it——"

He had thrown himself into a chair, and, laying his head on the table, gave way to an outburst of grief which he tried in vain to control.

"If he had reproached me, I could have borne it—'tis this silence," he said at last. "Such a generous, open nature as he always was ! I feel almost as though I had murdered him !

That he could know me so near, and yet persistently remain away! I could not have done it, however he had wronged me."

"I don't believe he did it," said Mary, her voice trembling. "'Tis as you say, unlike him, and I'll not believe it of him. He is, I'm sure, as unhappy as you are yourself. He loves you, I'm convinced, as much as ever——"

"Tell him when you see him," Jasper began, looking up at Mary, "that if—but no! I'll send no message! Words—even the best-intentioned—might make the breach wider, and can never help to heal it. We're past that now."

* * * * *

Jasper had a few moments with Althea next morning, before he rode away. It was a sorrowful parting, although he hoped to return before many weeks should have passed. In the lingering hope that Noel might yet come, he put off his departure to the last moment, and returned to his uncle's house, after bidding Althea farewell. Although nothing had been publicly said about it (even Mrs. Fleming having on this occasion had the discretion to hold her tongue), they all knew that Jasper had had no communication with his brother while in town.

After Jasper was gone, Mary listened to her mother's lugubrious remarks on the unsatisfactory religious state of Philadelphia, Miss Digby's Episcopalian views, and the uncertainty of life, until her endurance was at an end, and she suddenly announced her intention of going to see Miss Digby—there would be just time before dinner. She accordingly hurried off, and had got to the corner of Market Street, when she came face to face with Noel.

Mary turned pale when she saw him.

"Is Jasper gone?" asked Noel, without pausing for the ordinary greetings. He looked haggard and as if he had been up all night.

"Yes, he is gone," returned Mary. And then, seeing that Noel's face fell, she added boldly,—"*And I think you have behaved very wickedly. You have let the Old Year go down upon your wrath—and all the town will know now that you and Jasper have quarrelled. I used to think better of you!*"

"Of course you take his part; I'm prepared for that," said Noel, foolishly nettled at Mary's last words.

"There's no part to take; 'tis *you* I'm disappointed in, that's all," retorted Mary, striking where she saw the weak point. "I thought you had been more—more——"

"More what, Mary? Speak out; you'll not offend me," said Noel quietly.

"More just—more manly—since you wish me to say it. And though I don't expect you to care for what I feel, I should have thought you might have been sorry to make Althea wretched."

"I can never be happy till I know you are so——" Althea had written those words to Noel six months ago. They caused him some remorse at this moment.

"You cannot understand what a man feels," he said; and then he added bitterly,—“Women think our attachment to them is as slight a thing as theirs is to us.”

"You do not, you cannot think so—you know 'tis a false, wicked thing to say—you know women are more faithful, more constant——"

Mary's face had flushed crimson, and angry tears were sparkling in her eyes.

"I know I'm a miserable dog, and all my friends turning against me—even you, that I thought was like my own sister," said Noel excitedly.

"I am the same as ever I was; 'tis you are changed," returned Mary. "You used to be as open-hearted as the day—I would never have believed you could harbour a black thought in your heart——"

"Now, 'tis you are unjust, Mary; my thoughts, I'm sure, don't deserve to be called black! If you think I can be easy while I'm at variance with my brother, you do me a monstrous wrong. If I've avoided seeing him, God knows 'twas only because I was afraid I might perhaps in heat say what would wound him. I would not see him, I thought, till I could be sure of not hurting him."

"He's hurt a thousand times worse by your unkind, unnatural silence," said Mary. "'Twas only this morning he said that if you had reproached him he could have borne it—but to refuse yourself to him, as you did last night——"

"I never did! I swear I never did!" cried Noel passionately. "How unjust, how suspicious he is grown! If he came, I did not know of it—no one told me."

"When Black Billy first says you're in, and then comes in half an hour to say you're gone out, what can Jasper think but that you denied yourself purposely?" asks Mary.

"I was out—I started on purpose to see him, but my

courage failed me at the last moment—and my head ached so that I scarce knew what I was doing—and I walked to get rid of it,” said Noel, somewhat incoherently—he felt a good deal ashamed of himself as he remembered last night, and was glad to think that Mary could know nothing about it. “I was on my way to him now—but I suppose he’s gone away angry with me——”

“Indeed, he is not,” cried Mary earnestly; “he was heart-broken last night, when he came back. He had waited two hours for you; and what hurt him so was fancying you was there all the while, and wouldn’t see him. If you’d heard what he said, you’d, I hope, have been ashamed of yourself, to think you could be so cruel to a brother that was willing to sacrifice his happiness for you! He couldn’t believe to the last you’d let him go without seeing you; he waited——”

“I’ve a great mind to go after him——” said Noel, much moved by Mary’s words.

“Oh, do, do, dear Noel!” cried Mary, taking his hand in both hers, and pressing it eagerly. “You’ll be easier, believe me; and if Althea’s good opinion is anything to you, she will say ’tis generous, and like yourself.”

Perhaps Mary had better not have referred to Althea. Noel’s face, which had cleared somewhat, clouded over again; but he repeated that he thought he would go after Jasper, and Mary went on her way (Noel did not offer to escort her to Miss Digby’s door) with a much lighter heart—although the first token she gave of it was to burst into a flood of tears, as soon as she saw Althea.

Jasper, with Telemachus behind him, pressed on in a not very enviable state of mind. Like most persons whose sense of duty is keen, he could not shake off the notion that he must be somehow to blame. His moral judgement was too healthy for him ever to have entertained the idea of a perfectly useless self-sacrifice; but the thought of his brother estranged was inexpressibly painful to him. He had perhaps a little underrated the strength of Noel’s attachment to Althea, and had forgotten that his brother was no longer a boy. His anticipations had seemed dark enough—but he told himself now that this stern, chilly implacability was worse than his worst fears. In fact, by this time, each of the brothers had pretty well persuaded himself that the other would never forgive him.

It much distressed Telemachus to see his master riding with head bent down and not speaking a word. Telemachus was not only perfectly well acquainted with all the circumstances which had occurred, but was also in possession of so many which had not, that he was at this very moment congratulating himself on having got his master safe out of Philadelphia, without the orthodox duel, which so often wound up affairs in which a lady was concerned. He was also considerably perturbed at the delay in starting, as he had shrewdly calculated that this would involve passing the night at Hallibut's, with the risk of getting one's throat cut by that enterprising tavern-keeper.

On arriving, however, at the tavern (soon after dark), Telemachus saw only new faces, and asking for Old Man Hallibut, was informed rather curtly that he had gone away. The speaker—a youngish man, dressed in a short coat, lined with an old blanket, who looked as though he might have served in the militia—added, with a suspicious look at Jasper, that for aught *he* cared, Old Man Hallibut might be gone to the Devil—where he had belonged of rights this many a year.

As the new landlord (for so he appeared to be) evidently intended this opinion for the ears of his guest, Colonel Fleming here observed, that an experience which he had had there one day last summer had led him to form a precisely similar opinion.

"I'm partikler glad now to hear you say so, stranger," said the landlord, in a much more friendly tone. "Do you know, now, your man en-quirin' like that for the old un', made me begin to sorter wonder ef you wasn't one of his kidney yourself."

By this time, the Colonel had been shown into the inn parlour; but as the fire had only been that instant lighted, and the chimney was smoking furiously, he was glad to beat a retreat into the kitchen, where he gathered from his host's conversation, that Old Man Hallibut's share in the attempted surprise of the Marquess had not only been discovered, but had led to some other awkward revelations, and that Old Hallibut had soon after mysteriously vanished. "But whether," observed the landlord, looking attentively at the Colonel's hat—as the rest of his uniform was covered by his cloak—"whether he tuk himself off, or whether he was made away with, nobody knows, an' don't much care."

The parlour was much the same as Jasper remembered it. Old Hallibut had evidently left his furniture behind him, and

Jasper was inclined to accept the darker explanation of his disappearance. His host waited upon him at dinner, or, to speak more correctly, he watched Telemachus do so, reserving himself for the more important duties of asking his guest every conceivable question which curiosity could dictate. Jasper was glad at last to plead fatigue as an excuse for being left alone.

It was some time after this that a knock was heard at the house door; and Telemachus (then entertaining the company in the kitchen with a particular account of the German prisoners at Cambridge) heard Major Branhholm's voice, inquiring whether he could have a bed, and whether there was not a military gentleman there from Philadelphia?

"A tallish gentleman—with one arm—in a blue coat—rather a fair complexion——" begins the landlord.

"That's he," says the newcomer, interrupting this description. "Where is he? Don't announce me—I'll go in to him—I'm his relation."

And while his horse was led off to the stable, and before Telemachus—whose thoughts leaped instantly to pistols and a duel, to be fought across the parlour table—could stir from the spot to which he stood rooted, Major Branhholm had thrown off his cloak, opened the parlour door, and gone in—carrying with him, unless Telemachus's eyes deceived him, a pair of holster-pistols.

This completed the dismay of poor Telemachus. Without stopping to reflect that gentlemen seldom use holster-pistols in affairs of this nature, and that Major Branhholm had probably only taken his pistols with him as a common precaution, and to prevent the powder getting damp, he slipped out of the kitchen, and carefully applied his ear to the parlour keyhole—resolved to rush in on the least alarm, and defend his master with his life. As Telemachus had a constitutional dislike to firearms of every description, he ought to be credited with having hereby performed an act of heroic self-devotion.

Jasper, who had slept the night before as little as Noel, and was moreover drowsy with the long ride through the snow, was lying on the settle by the fire, with a saddle-bag for a pillow—so fast asleep, that even the opening of the door did not immediately awake him.

Noel looked at him for a moment, as he lay with his face a little turned towards him—his empty sleeve lying across his breast, and his right arm hanging down, and almost touching

the floor. A book had fallen from his hand, and lay open ; Noel recognised it as a little much-used copy of Gray, which Jasper often carried about with him.

He lay so still, and looked so weary—though his face was very calm—that Noel waited, unwilling to disturb him ; but perhaps Jasper felt his gaze, for he presently stirred, and his face changed.

“Jasper,” said Noel, softly at first, and then louder—
“Jasper ! Jasper !” he said again, laying a hand on his brother’s shoulder.

In a moment Jasper had sprung up, his own hand on his sword. Then he saw who it was, and let his sword fall to his side, as he said sternly—observing the pistols on the table, and mistaking Noel’s pale and haggard looks for the whiteness of anger—

“What folly is this, Noel ? If you have come here imagining you can provoke me into giving you a meeting, no consideration on earth shall ever make me do it !”

But Noel stretched out his arms to his brother, as he cried, the tears gushing from his eyes,—“No, no, brother ! I come for reconciliation !” And Telemachus, his ear glued to the keyhole, heard his master cry in a voice so agitated that he would not have known it,—“Oh, my dear brother ! Oh, thank God !”

* * * * *

After this, there was so long a silence, that Telemachus dared not wait to hear more, lest he should be caught eaves-dropping. He stole back to the kitchen—so greatly relieved in his fears, if not in his curiosity, that he could not withstand the temptation of giving a highly-coloured narrative of his visit to the tavern last summer, and of the manner in which his master had discovered and defeated Old Hallibut’s plan to surprise the Marquess.

CHAPTER LXXIX.

CAPTAIN DIGBY IN THE SOUTH.

ON his arrival at Lancaster, Colonel Fleming found that respectable town in a sad uproar, and Colonel Troup, the Continental officer in command, in a high state of indignation.

Some mischievous persons had, by way of a hoax, persuaded the good folks of Lancaster that King George had made a present of their town to General Riedesel, in return for his crossing the seas to put down the rebellion. This excellent jest had like to have proved very sober earnest for the poor Baron and his Germans. The Lancastrians were furious—it was all Colonel Troup could do to protect his prisoners from absolute insult, and more than he could do to get the outraged Lancastrians to supply their wants. Colonel Fleming's utmost eloquence did but half convince the townspeople that the King of England had not given away their town.

Colonel Fleming accompanied the troops to Charlottesville, vainly attempting by the way to cheer poor General Riedesel. His captivity weighed heavily on him, and as his beloved Baroness and her children were not to follow for some weeks, his spirits were at even a lower ebb than usual. General Phillips, who was very fond of the Baron, was himself still deeply incensed at having been put under arrest, and had not ceased to talk about poor Brown's murder, as he always called that most unhappy affair. When the Baroness came, things were better, though still sufficiently dismal. The Baroness made the best of everything—even of the dreadful journey through savage ravines covered with snow and ice—and laughed at everything which could by any possibility be laughed at; but the honest Baron could not take things thus lightly. A farmer came in one day, and wanted to see what Germans were like; the Baroness made a joke of it, but the poor General shed tears at beholding his dear Frederika put to such indignity. He would talk with Phillips by the hour together of the Seven Years' War, in which they had served together under the Great Frederick, but nothing—not even his wife and his little girls—could make him ever forget that he was a prisoner. The Baroness set him to gardening; but as he would not wear a hat, the only result of this was a bad sunstroke. At last, late in the autumn, Phillips and he were allowed to go to New York on parole, with a view to their being exchanged, and arrived there just before Sir Henry Clinton set out for Charleston.

From all this it will be seen how lucky Captain Digby was to have been sent on that perilous errand, and so escaped being included in the Convention of Saratoga.

Some little time before Colonel Campbell's expedition

sailed, Jack André one day bluntly asked his friend when the marriage was to come off?

"What marriage?" asked Fred, suddenly becoming the hue of a boiled lobster—it was impossible Jack could know of Miss Fleming's letter, yet what else could he mean?

"Why, your sister and Colonel Hudibras, to be sure," says André in a light tone, assumed to cover some embarrassment.

"Who the doose is he?" asked Fred, staring.

"'Tis the name of a Roundhead, in a certain poem which made a deal of noise in its day," explained André, carelessly leaning back in the window-seat. "Art so dull, Fred, as not to guess I mean thy friend, the one-armed rebel Colonel, who read us all such a lecture in Philadelphia? Come, thy face betrays thee, Fred—denial is vain. I'll stake my existence, 'twas not for nothing your sister threw a quart of water over me, for calling him Hudibras."

"Good heavens! Jack, what on earth d'ye mean?" says Fred in a huff. "I don't know who what's-his-name was—but I don't like the sound of his name, and I suppose you mean to make fun of Fleming—who happens, by the bye, to be a particular friend of mine. But as to Ally's throwing a quart of water over you, 'tis going a little too far to say such a thing of a lady, even in jest."

"'Twas by the purest accident in the world," said André, hastening to appease his friend. "Nevertheless, I had offended her, and it was the direct consequence of my misdeed, though not, as I tell you, wilfully done by her. I promise you, she took up the cudgels for him! He owes me eternal gratitude. However, your sister forgave me—to tell you the truth, I made her an apology on my knees."

"Half this is jest, of course, Jack," said Fred, now quite good-humoured again. "You've such a way of putting things, that I never know which is earnest and which is jest, and I'm hanged if I can make head or tail of it all."

"'Tis all true, on my honour," protested André, who hugely enjoyed playing upon his friend's simplicity. "I suspected Colonel Fleming had made an impression, and was resolved to prove it, so I artfully led the conversation round to him, but I came by the worst for my pains; my attempt to make the Colonel appear ridiculous ended, as I've told you, in my finding myself on my knees in a pool of water, surrounded by the roses I had just presented to the ladies."

"I wonder Ally never told me of it," said Fred. "However, Jack, I'll be bound you got yourself out of the scrape with flying colours somehow or other."

"Only, though, by making a most handsome speech about the Colonel, confound him! if he is your particular friend," returns André. "But all this while you aint answered me—when is the happy event?"

"Ally won't hear of it till the rebellion's put down," replied Fred, thus indirectly admitting the main fact.

"Is that the way she phrases it to Colonel Hudibras?" asked André slyly, yet with a something in his manner unmistakably showing chagrin.

"But how on earth came you to suspect anything, Jack? I never had the least idea of it," observed Fred—as though it must in this case have been a mystery indeed. "And when she told me, I was so completely took aback, you could have knocked me down with a feather."

"I love thee, Fred, but thou art not a conjurer," returned his friend. "How did I suspect it? Why, I felt her start, as she had my arm, while we was going down into the hall after supper, on the night of the Mischianza; and I saw in her eyes the look a woman hath when she sees what she has been looking for. There stands the Colonel, frowning disapproval—

'Quoth he, in all my life 'till now
I ne'er saw so profane a show—'

looking as if he would like to put us all to the sword—stern, uncompromising—he winced, though, when he saw your sister, and bit his lip; he's not all iron and steel, though he looks so, and I fancy that moment put his philosophy shrewdly to the touch. Then they went out together into the garden—I would have given a great deal to know what they talked about. Was it made up between 'em that night—if 'tis not an indiscreet question?"

"I fancy so," replied Fred. "But really, Jack, 'tis like inspiration! Oh, how I wish you was coming with us to Georgia; time never hangs heavy where you are!"

Colonel Campbell's expedition was entirely successful. In less than a fortnight Georgia was reduced; and by the beginning of March, General Prevost (who had by that time arrived at Savannah from Florida, and assumed the command) wrote home to Lord George that the rebels would not again disturb us here.

The only fault of this campaign in Digby's eyes was that it was too short. For several weeks after Colonel Campbell had set out for England, with this letter and his laurels, Fred remained biting his nails in Savannah—sighing for Jack André, Wickham, and the other choice spirits left behind in New York—thinking dismally of Mary Fleming—and looking out over the islands and swampy flats, trying to imagine a body of rebels approaching through the distant cane-brake. But the bright green of the young canes was only stirred by the sluggish south-east breezes blowing from the Bahamas.

Many a weary day had he spent thus, and had come to the conclusion that a landscape whose monotony is only relieved by ships' masts and palmetto trees is of all others the most insipid, when, at the end of April, news was received that the rebel General Lincoln (encamped on the other side of the Savannah river) had marched the greater part of his army towards Augusta, in order to protect a meeting of rebel delegates. General Prevost instantly resolved to profit by this opportunity, and make a dash at Charleston. He very nearly succeeded, and had actually summoned Charleston, when, hearing that Lincoln was hurrying back, he was compelled to raise the siege that same night, and betake himself to the islands south of the harbour, there to wait for the supplies and reinforcements expected from New York. Captain Digby, though thus disappointed of a siege, was in the affair at Stono Ferry. Colonel Maitland, who commanded there, was a friend of Captain André, who had particularly recommended Digby to him.

Although during part of this time, Sir George Collier and General Matthews were in Virginia (where they took or destroyed a vast amount of stores and prizes), very little trustworthy information reached General Prevost's army of what was going on in other parts, and that little came by the round-about way of New York. Thence Digby heard of Sir Henry Clinton's expedition up the Hudson, and of Tryon's more important descent on Connecticut. A less agreeable piece of news, which was received soon after, was an account of the surprise of Stony Point by General Wayne. This was especially disagreeable news to Captain Digby, as Colonel Johnson, who commanded in that fort, was a friend of his. But the loss of the fort (which the rebels at once dismantled and abandoned) was far more than made up for, by the destruction a little

later on of the whole marine force of Boston, by Sir George Collier, in the *Penobscot*, in Maine.

In every letter which reached the army from New York, mention was made of the rebel cruisers—who kept the town in constant alarm—and of the movements of General Washington's army, which seemed to show that he was meditating a serious attack.

It was very galling to Digby, while thus cooped up on Port Royal, to know that the detachment under General Grant (which had left New York last November) was enjoying the privilege of beating the French at Santa Lucia. Why had he not gone with it, instead of coming to this pestilential hole? he asked himself, as he looked round on the steaming swamps. Grant's troops had landed on Santa Lucia, taken all the forts, and held them against the whole of D'Estaing's fleet and army, which had hove in sight just as the last French flag on the hill posts had struck! All through the unwholesome heats of summer did Captain Digby fret at the thought of it. But his turn was to come. At the beginning of September, the French fleet suddenly appeared off the coast in great force, and a few days afterwards an order came to Colonel Maitland, to join General Prevost instantly, as Savannah was certainly the enemy's object.

As the ship-channel was held by the French fleet, Colonel Maitland was obliged to make a detour by the marshes, and thought himself very lucky to be able to drag his empty boats through a cut, and so drop down the river into the town. As they went, they heard that Lincoln was crossing at Zubly's Ferry, and that the siege had begun. That was an anxious moment, when, on the morning of the 16th, they came in sight of Savannah—but the British colours were still flying on the redoubts.

They were none too soon—D'Estaing had already summoned the town to surrender to the King of France, reminding General Prevost of how he had taken Granada, and threatening him with a sack.

This insolent summons, and the French Admiral's discourteous refusal some days after to allow the women and children to go down the river in ships, under the protection of a French man-of-war, made Fred rejoice more than ever at the prospect before him. The enemy was in overwhelming superiority, but the works were pushed on with such spirit and

effect that when, before dawn on an October morning, the assault was made, it was repulsed with great loss to the assailants—who, however, twice planted their colours on the parapet of one of the redoubts. Captain Digby here greatly distinguished himself—beating back the enemy, who were swarming over the parapet, and afterwards bringing up his company to support the grenadiers in that decisive charge which cleared the ditches, and drove the enemy into the swamp. On the 18th, the siege was raised, and the French fleet set sail once more for the West Indies.

But though the French had gone, the rebels remained, and despatches in cipher were received from Sir Henry Clinton, informing General Prevost of his intention, so soon as he should be assured the French had left the American coasts, to himself attempt the reduction of South Carolina. After a long and terrible voyage, Sir Henry reached Savannah at the end of January, with most of his horses dead.

Captain Digby now enjoyed a few days of the society of his friend André. André was by this time a Major—having been promoted by Sir Henry expressly that he might hold the Adjutant-Generalship resigned by Lord Rawdon. André's rapid promotion would certainly have given rise to heart-burnings, if he had been a less agreeable fellow. Every one said that he could do as he liked with Sir Henry, and he made use of his influence to get Digby the majority which had been promised him ever since he carried poor General Burgoyne's last appeal for succour.

That unfortunate General (Fred learned from André) was now in dire disgrace for having declined, partly on the score of his health, to return and share the captivity of his army. The poor General had, it seemed, pathetically complained of being ordered into captivity, just when a war with France gave him an opportunity of wiping out his misfortune. Digby swore it was a shame, and Burgoyne the most ill-used of Generals—in his heart he had never forgiven Sir Henry for not bursting through forests and mountains and all other obstacles to his relief.

Sir Henry intended to try and regain Charleston, and Major Digby's regiment was almost immediately ordered thither from Savannah. After a twelve days' march across swamps, rivers, and inlets, they reached the main army, encamped on the islands already only too familiar to Digby. They found the town

invested by land and sea, and the engineers hard at work on the first parallel.

The six weeks' siege of Charleston was marked by the usual incidents of skirmishes, parleys, and reconnaissances. As soon as the Admiral could get over the bar—which was a matter of great difficulty and danger, Sir Henry Clinton had summoned the town. Colonel Tarleton and his Legion, by taking possession of Biggin's Bridge on Cooper River, soon cut off the last communication between Charleston and the country, and on the 21st of April, reinforcements arrived—among them the Queen's Rangers, but, to Major Digby's great disappointment, Captain Wickham had been left behind with the Hussars on Staten Island, New York being now in a very unprotected condition.

Somewhere about this time, Major Digby, calling at Major André's quarters, was informed by his servant that he was gone across Cooper River with a message to Lord Cornwallis. It struck Digby as rather odd that the Adjutant-General should be sent on such a service, but as news came in that night that Colonel Tarleton (then with his lordship) had totally cut off a body of the enemy's horse at the Santee, he supposed that André's errand might have concerned this affair.

Happening to be off duty next evening, a little after dark, he went to see if his friend had returned, and, after being kept waiting with unusual ceremony, was admitted.

He found the Major evidently but just arrived, and still in his travelling cloak and a round hat.

"Come in, my dear fellow, come in," he exclaimed, in a gleeful tone; "you can keep a secret, I know—not that 'tis of such great importance, now I'm safe back. I can't resist letting you see me. Confess, I should have imposed on you, had you met me in the streets of Philadelphia!"

So saying, the Major threw off his hat and cloak, and, composing his features to an admirable gravity, faced round on his friend, on whom he had hitherto turned his back.

"How goes the cause of our much-injured country?" asks the Major in a nasal drawl. "Have the hirelings of a crowned and sceptred tyrant hung up any more patriots lately?"

"Pon my soul, André, 'tis magnificent!" cried Digby, staring in amazement. "But what's the object—you said something of a secret—sure you aint going to venture within the rebel lines?"

"I've been, sir, I've been!" cries the other, almost dancing

with triumph, and then once more composing himself to the sobriety befitting his long locks and homespun attire.

"But," stammered Digby, "supposing they'd discovered you, wouldn't they have hanged you?"

"What! hang the Adjutant-General of the British army? Insolent as they are, they would never dare *that*," says André easily. "But 'twould have been a cursed undignified position to be caught in, I grant you; and they would no doubt have put a high price on me, and refused to exchange me for less than a round dozen of their butcher, baker, and candlestick-maker Generals. But oh, Digby, 'twas exquisitely rich! I lay at the house of an honest quaker on the East Bay. His brother was there, ill of an ague, and looked at me plaguey hard—I believe he had his doubts of me, but durst not express 'em, lest he should get his brother strung up for harbouring me."

"But how did you get in? Was you not stopped by the patrols?" asked Digby, still scarcely able to believe his eyes.

"I fetched a compass, sir, as the Scripture hath it, and came down to the other side of the river, with a few fat beasts for the patriot garrison," replied André, putting on the Colonial twang. "I took 'em in most sweetly. I know every point of their defences, and that they expect to be relieved by the French fleet under De Ternay—for all their experience cannot teach 'em not to put their trust in Egypt. Sir Harry will take this hint, and press the siege with vigour—but not a syllable of this, Fred, to a living soul. The stratagem is one that will keep as long as 'tis undiscovered, and we may yet need it."

"You seem to find it a monstrous good joke, Jack," said Fred uneasily. "I confess 'tis the very last service I ever wish to be employed on, though of course there are circumstances which might make it one's duty—"

"You came very near to doing it yourself, my dear boy, after Saratoga," said André.

"And I'd sooner face a fire twenty times hotter nor the fire at Saratoga than do it again!" cried Fred. "I promise you, I felt a rope round my neck all the way!"

"You was in more danger than I," said André. "Sir Harry's rebel namesake is a terrible determined fellow. Well, Charleston must shortly fall—as sure as you will to-morrow morning see the steeple of Saint Michael's painted black."

"What the doose do you mean?" asked Digby, whose mind, moving slowly, had not yet recovered from its astonishment,

and who began to fear that the strain necessary for keeping up his assumed part had disordered his friend's brains. But André explained, that a rebel Commodore had taken it into his head that the white steeple was a conspicuous mark for the British artillerymen, and intended that very day to paint it black. And, sure enough, next morning a *black* steeple rose above the long line of white houses. But alas ! the Commodore had only made matters worse—the black steeple was a still better mark than the white one !

CHAPTER LXXX.

PENNSYLVANIA v. GOVERNOR ARNOLD.

Caius Marcius was
A worthy officer i' the war ; but insolent,
O'ercome with pride, ambitious past all thinking,
Self-loving—
CORIOLANUS.

GENERAL ARNOLD had been appointed Governor of Philadelphia, expressly because the condition of the wound which he had received at Saratoga unfitted him for more active service. But the mental discomfort of his position bade fair to counterbalance the beneficial effect of bodily rest. Philadelphia was the residence of so many Tories and loyalists, that the greater part of the property in it belonged to persons unfavourable to the Declaration of Independence, if not disposed to accept almost any terms offered by the British Government. It was full of open enemies and lukewarm friends—most of them so eminently respectable, and so closely connected with the best families of the State, that summary measures of repression were likely to excite dangerous opposition.

A practical dilemma, however, had arisen, which could only be met by a somewhat summary remedy. Under the pretext of removing private property, a vast amount of goods had been transferred from the city to various places—to be eventually used, as every one knew, by the supporters of the British Government and even by the British army itself. To prevent this, Congress had ordered that no goods whatever should be removed from Philadelphia, until a Commission could decide whether such goods belonged legally to the King of England or any of his subjects ; and, pending this Commission, shops and stores were ordered to be closed.

The Proclamation to this effect was written by President Reed, but the Governor issued it, and had the odium of it. The sleek Philadelphians asked each other why this New Englander was to rule them by martial law? And it must be owned that Arnold took small pains to propitiate them. His haughty temper, his magnificence—even his friendliness to Tory citizens—offended them; and a mighty piece of work was made about some wagons belonging to the State, which he had impressed in order to save some property belonging to persons obnoxious for having remained in the city during the British occupation.

The Governor's approaching marriage with the daughter of a Tory gentleman was another grievance. It may be imagined how little he was likely to tolerate interference on such a matter as this!

His accounts for the expenses which he had incurred in Canada had been severely challenged, referred from one committee to another, and were still unsettled.

The plan of a country-life had taken a great hold upon his imagination, ever since he had seen Philip Schuyler at home in that fine old manor-house near Saratoga, whose flames had lighted Burgoyne's last march. He had gone so far as to submit his enterprise to the New York deputies in Congress, and John Jay had approved of it, and had written to the Governor of New York State to beg him to use his influence in favour of the scheme.

Very early in February, General Arnold determined to go himself to Kingston—where the Legislature of New York State then sat. On his way he visited the camp at Middlebrook, to which General Washington had now returned. He laid his plans before His Excellency—who, however, listened with a somewhat incredulous smile. His Excellency himself desired nothing so much as to be able one day to return to that country-life which General Arnold was describing so eloquently. "But you, my dear sir, are, I fancy, a more restless spirit," he observed. "However, the undertaking is a useful one, and would, for some time at least, demand all your energies."

A disagreeable surprise, however, was awaiting the General. On his return to his lodging he found Major Branhholm just arrived, splashed from head to foot with hard riding, and wearing so grave a countenance that the General hastily asked if Miss Shippen was ill?

"No, sir—she was perfectly well when I left," replied Noel, taking a packet from his pocket. "Will you please to look at this, sir? 'Twas sent to Congress the instant you had left the town. Major Clarkson agreed with me that you ought to be informed of it as soon as possible."

"What!" cries the General, unfolding the packet—"Charges!—and printed in the public journals, so as to prejudice me in the eyes of the people! This is the hand of Joseph Reed!"

The General's anger increased as he read. He grew purple with rage; the veins stood out on his forehead. He struck the table with his clenched fist, cruelly jarring his wounded leg; but he was by this time almost insensible to bodily pain.

"A d——d pack of snakes-in-the-grass!" he cried, crumpling the paper. "They knew weeks ago that I was going away, but they wait till I've turned my back! The black-hearted turn-coat charges me with having shut the stores! Congress ordered it, and he wrote the Proclamation! But I'll be righted! I'll demand a court-martial! I'll go to Washington this moment! Give me your arm!"

The discovery that a copy of the original draft had been sent to the various State-Governors, and indeed, to pretty nearly everybody except the accused person himself, did not tend to abate the General's wrath—it could hardly increase it. No one could read the charges without perceiving that the persons who had drawn them up had lost all sense of judicial fairness.

They were eight in number. The first accused General Arnold of having, last spring, given a permit to a vessel belonging to disaffected persons, to come into a port, without consulting the Commander-in-Chief, or the State Authorities.

The second related to the closing of the shops, and accused the Governor of having taken advantage of this to make purchases for his own benefit. The third charged him with imposing menial offices on the sons of freemen of Pennsylvania, when called out by Congress on military duty—and with having justified himself on the ground that the citizen is lost in the soldier. The fourth related to the sloop *Active*—a prize taken by some people of Connecticut, whose suit Arnold was charged with having illegally purchased. The fifth concerned the wagons. The sixth charged the Governor with furnishing a disaffected person with a pass; and the seventh, with having

"indecently and disrespectfully" refused to give any explanation about the wagons.

The last charge was less defined. It accused Arnold of having, during his command in Philadelphia, "discouraged and neglected" persons who had adhered to their country's cause, "with an entire different conduct towards those of another character;" and added that if the said command was, "as is generally believed," to cost the United States four or five thousand a year, Pennsylvania would be very unwilling to pay any share of it.

Three at least of these charges were obviously vexatious. In the others, the frequent recurrence of such expressions, as "it is alleged and believed," "it has been publicly charged," "it may be reasonably inferred," looked—to say the least of it—as though the framers of the indictment had more ill-will than legal proofs.

Of course, Althea very quickly heard of all this—even before Peggy Shippen came in one morning (a few days after Major Branhholm had posted off to the General), with a letter which she had just received from her betrothed, passionately imploring her not to be uneasy.

"As if I could help being uneasy!" says Peggy, quite pale, and her eyes red with crying. "As for President Reed, I should like to kill him, that I should! Nasty white-faced thing! He went to see papa the other day—I wish I'd known what he was about! He takes your hand in such a smooth sneaking way, and he never looks you in the face! How people can say he's handsome, I can't think! They say he's so elegant! I'm sure there's no accounting for tastes. I like a manly figure in a man. I wish I was married to him already, that I do! I won't have it put off a day, let my aunt talk as she likes!"

Major Clarkson (whose own name appeared in the charge about the pass) had instantly issued a card, begging the public to suspend their judgement; and the General himself now sent out another, in which he complained of the unfairness of this attempt to influence the public mind before trial.

He had demanded a court-martial. The charges were referred to a Committee, who reported that only four of them could come under the jurisdiction of a court-martial, the others being matters for a civil suit. The Committee further reported that they had no evidence on any charge except the fifth and

the seventh—the Council, though repeatedly applied to, having not only refused to furnish any, but having threatened the Committee, and charged them with partiality, for asking it. The Committee added in conclusion, that after the unexampled measures which the Council had employed against General Arnold, they were of opinion that no concession or acknowledgment could be expected from him.

Upon this the General naturally considered himself cleared. The Committee had expressly acquitted him of any intentional wrong. He resigned his command—for which he had Washington's permission—and wrote to Congress to beg them to report on his case at once, and so set him right with the public.

What then was his astonishment and indignation, when the Council wrote to Congress, that General Arnold had left the State while the charges were pending, and that a misunderstanding had prevented them from presenting their testimony!

By this time, the matter had become a State question. The Council had Pennsylvania behind it, and Pennsylvania must be kept in a good-humour. So, after another Committee, a court-martial was at last ordered for the 1st of May.

Before that day arrived, the General was married to Peggy Shippen. The ceremony took place in her father's house. Peggy was all smiles and tears, and looked, as Peggy Chew said to Althea afterwards, like a rose-bud dipped in dew. Althea at first wished to decline being present, but Peggy begged so hard, that she consented; and young Mr. Chew effectually prevented her having any difficulty in avoiding a *tête-à-tête* with Major Branzholm. The bridegroom leaned on his secretary's arm most of the time, and Noel felt this to be so great an honour, that he allowed himself to be carried away by the festive occasion, in spite of Althea's being there, and of the General's having a court-martial hanging over his head. Noel would have laughed to scorn the notion that the court-martial could properly be compared to the sword of Damocles. It was, he and most people thought, a mere form—a sop to pacify Pennsylvania. Yet it was in very truth the sword of Damocles—and it hung above not only Benedict Arnold but above the whole future of the States.

CHAPTER LXXXI

A WOUNDED NAME.

1st Cit. For my part,
When I said, banish him, I said, 'Twas pity.
2d Cit. And so did I.

CORIOLANUS.

MAJOR DIGBY was anathematising the swamps of Georgia, and Sir Henry Clinton, Lord Cornwallis, and Major André were tossing uneasily at sea, when General Arnold's trial came on at Morristown. When the 1st of May arrived, the Council of Pennsylvania said they were not ready with their evidence, so the trial was put off to the 1st of June—by which time the British were going up the Hudson, and American officers had other things to do than to hold court-martials.

The General endured the delay very impatiently. He had thought better of leaving the army, and now talked of seeking active service again, as soon as his wounds would permit—above all, as soon as his cause was heard. He had spent most of the time at the beautiful country-house which he had bought at Mount Pleasant, on the banks of the Schuykil. Here his sister and his eldest son had visited him, and Peggy did the honours with great spirit.

It was now open war between the General and President Reed. When the discontents in Philadelphia broke out in October, in the Fort Wilson Riot, the President had ordered Arnold to leave the ground. He had obeyed—being no longer Governor of the city, but he had openly said to Mr. Wilson that the President had raised the riot, and made no attempt to conceal his contempt for him.

December was far advanced, and the army had gone into winter quarters, when the court-martial met at last. It sat at Morristown, and thither Noel went to hear his idolised commander triumphantly vindicated.

The trial of a General pre-eminent for personal gallantry, and still suffering from wounds received in the most brilliant achievement of the whole war, was a spectacle sufficiently odious in itself, and Arnold took care to make it as conspicuous as possible. Not content with allowing his wounds to plead for him, he appeared in the epaulettes and sword-knots

which Washington had sent him ; and in his defence he read the letter which had accompanied them, and also the letter of Congress, presenting him with a horse in the place of the two slain under him at Ridgefield—which horse, as every one knew, he was not even yet able to mount. He rehearsed his services and his wrongs, and commented with bitter irony on the President and the Council of Pennsylvania making it a charge against him that he had acted without consulting the Commander-in-Chief.

“Non tali auxilio eget, nec defensoribus istis,”

he said, sarcastically turning Virgil's line for the benefit of members of the Conway Cabal there present.

But he wound up with a more damning allusion still, and one which it was still more impossible to misunderstand.

“I can say,” he said—with a deadly emphasis on every word, and steadily fixing his eye on Reed's pale face, “I never basked in the sunshine of my General's favour, and courted him to his face, when I was at the same time treating him with the greatest disrespect, and vilifying his character when absent. This is more than a ruling member of the Council of the State of Pennsylvania can say—as it is *alleged and believed*.”

Having shot this arrow between the joints of President Reed's armour, the General awaited the decision of his judges, with very little doubt as to their verdict.

The trial had occupied many days, and judgement was not given till the end of January. The court acquitted the General on two of the charges, and exonerated him from all intentional wrong in the others ; but found that in the matters of the sloop *Active* and of the wagons he had behaved imprudently and improperly, considering his position—and sentenced him to be reprimanded by the Commander-in-Chief.

Arnold was astounded ; and public feeling ran so strong, that the Council themselves made haste to request Congress to dispense with the reprimand—finding, as they said, that the General's sufferings and services were so deeply impressed on their minds, as to obliterate every other sentiment.

But Congress was inexorable—perhaps some of its members were not sorry to compel Washington to rebuke Gates's rival.

Washington performed the unwelcome task assigned to him

as delicately as possible—even Noel confessed that, although his heart was almost bursting with indignation.

“Our profession is the chastest of all,” said His Excellency; “even the shadow of a fault tarnishes the lustre of our finest achievements. The least inadvertence may rob us of the public favour, so hard to be acquired. I reprimand you for having forgotten that in proportion as you have rendered yourself formidable to our enemies, you should have been guarded and temperate in your deportment towards your fellow-citizens.”

This was all the censure. His Excellency only added an exhortation to Arnold to exhibit anew those noble qualities which had placed him on the list of his country’s most valued commanders—and a promise to furnish him with every opportunity in his power of regaining his country’s esteem.

Mild as this reprimand was, it was still a reprimand. The indiscretions of which Arnold had undoubtedly been guilty—his haughty disregard of civil authority, his extravagance and ostentation—were all forgotten in the severity of his punishment. He had been subjected to the indignity of a public rebuke—for the sake, as all his friends said, and as most of the public believed, of conciliating the powerful State of Pennsylvania. Nor did the news from the South tend to make the country indifferent to this affront put upon a General who was always fortunate in the field, and unfortunate only in the malice of his enemies.

As for Noel, he hardly dared speak of what he felt; only to Mary did he talk of the one ray of comfort to which he turned. Another French force was reported about to sail. When it arrived, the long-deferred recovery of New York would be undertaken—and then General Arnold would have that opportunity which Washington had promised him, and at another Saratoga would avenge his outraged honour by a last and crowning victory. Expecting this, Noel had refused to apply for employment in the Carolinas. “I was with him on the march to Quebec,” he said; “I fought beside him on Lake Champlain, and at Ridgefield and Saratoga, and I will follow no other General, so long as he holds a command.”

CHAPTER LXXXII.

HAIR-SPLITTING.

Isabella.—I had rather
Wait on you to your funeral.

THE DUKE OF MILAN.

COLONEL FLEMING rejoined his regiment as soon as the Convention troops had settled down to their new mode of life, which offered many more alleviations than had been possible in the close quarters of Cambridge. The Colonel again spent a few days in Philadelphia (which he could hardly avoid passing through on his way to Middlebrook), and while there, he ventured to sound Mrs. Maverick as to the possibility of Miss Digby's consenting to marry him, without waiting for the close of a war which might still be prolonged for several years.

Mrs. Maverick—whom he had approached with some misgivings—to his great surprise, warmly seconded the idea, and declared she did not see why, if it was to be, it should not be at once.

She communicated this view to her young relative, but Althea, in great distress, entreated her not to try to persuade her, as nothing could alter her resolution.

"I know all you would say, dear cousin," she continued, as Mrs. Maverick would have replied. "Pray spare me; it costs me enough already, without the tortures of arguing about it. I could never be happy—'twould seem a sin, and I should expect a curse. If I could forget everything else, there is Fred——"

"I believe if Fred was to be asked, he'd say as I do, that if 'tis to be, there's no good reason for delay," said Mrs. Maverick, catching at this.

"It could not make me easy to do it, if he did," said Althea sadly.

"Besides, child, who knows"—Mrs. Maverick said this in a confidential, not to say Jesuitical tone—"who knows but what, when you're once married to the Colonel, you could get him to see things different? He's madly in love with you—I am an old woman, and know the signs, and his being so quiet don't deceive me. He worships the ground you tread on, and you might by degrees wean him——"

"Never say such a thing to me again, cousin!" said Althea, drawing herself up with a dignity which somewhat scared the old lady. She went on in a lower voice, which thrilled with suppressed passion—her eyes blazed, but her face was as white as a sheet: "Never say such a thing again! I would sooner die—nay, I would sooner see him dead before my eyes—than I would tamper with his honour! 'Twould be useless, I know—I should but lose his esteem for ever; but if I thought I could succeed, I would die sooner than attempt it! Oh, why did you say it?"

Here Althea threw herself on the sofa, and burst into hysterical tears.

"Lord, Lord, who'd have thought you'd have took it that way, child? God knows, I meant nothing dishonourable!" cried Mrs. Maverick in a fluster. "But all the world knows a man's wife can do pretty much what she likes with him."

"Not with Jasper Fleming!" cried Althea excitedly. "Oh, how little you must know him, to think I could persuade him from what he thinks is his duty! And how little you must know me, to think I'd try to do it!"

"For that matter, I don't suppose either of you is so mighty superior to all the rest of mankind, as to be above being influenced," said Mrs. Maverick, losing her temper. "I suppose the long and the short of all this is, that he has persuaded you to become as great a rebel as himself. Of course, if you think the rebels have the right of it——"

"I don't think it," returned Althea vehemently. "I think there's no right anywhere, for that matter—we're all wrong! We drove them to rebel in the first instance, but 'tis they now that won't be reconciled. But Colonel Fleming does not see it so, and I would sooner die than attempt to persuade him out of his conscience."

Mrs. Maverick, now very warm, protested she did not understand these high-flown, hair-splitting distinctions. If Althea thought Colonel Fleming took a wrong view, 'twas her plain duty to try and set him right; and to say that it was not, was mere sophistry.

"Are duty and honour sophistry?" asked Althea hotly. "Is it hair-splitting, to say that a man is a traitor if he abandons the side he believes to be in the right, even though that side may be actually in the wrong?"

On this Mrs. Maverick was so ill-advised as to say that—if

it came to that — Colonel Fleming was a traitor already, and——

“That he is not!” cried Althea, sobbing; “a rebel he may be, but no traitor! But I’ll not stay to hear you say such things of him!”

With this Althea flounced out at the door, and, going to her room, wept until she was not fit to be seen, while Mrs. Maverick, feeling decidedly worsted, began to consider what account she could give the Colonel of the embassy which she had undertaken. He was to come that afternoon to take a dish of tea with them, and it was with considerable trepidation that she received him. To her great relief, he anticipated her confession of failure, by saying, before she could begin it, that he was sorry he had broached the subject, as he was convinced on reflection that it would only cause pain to Althea.

“Well, the fact is,” said Mrs. Maverick, looking rather foolish, “I broached the subject to her just now——”

“You don’t mean to say she consents?” cried the Colonel —so eagerly, that Mrs. Maverick would have given a good deal not to have been obliged to reply,—

“No—she has scruples which I’ve tried in vain to combat. To tell you the truth, Colonel Fleming, I did my errand very awkwardly, and—and—said some things as I should be very glad to recall. I’ve offended Althea; and if she tells you what I said, I doubt you will be offended too.”

“Then I won’t ask her to tell me,” says the Colonel, kissing the old lady’s hand—she was almost in tears. “I should be an ungrateful wretch, indeed, if I was to take offence at a word. I trust Althea is not displeased with me for having made the proposal? ’Twas, I own, not quite fair to do so, but the temptation was very great——”

“Oh, you need have no fears there—she thinks you can’t err! She’s just been telling me that your wrong is better than other people’s right,” said Mrs. Maverick a little tartly—“She adores you——”

At this moment the door opened, and Althea herself came in. She was very pale, and the traces of tears were still quite visible, but she was perfectly calm and self-possessed. She walked straight up to Jasper, and without saying a word laid her head down on his shoulder like a tired child. There was an indescribable dejection about her manner which smote Jasper to the heart. He put his arm round her, but neither of them spoke.

"Well, I'll leave you," said the old lady, looking at them for a moment with genuine compassion for them both.

"Forgive me, Althea," said Jasper after a pause. "Forgive me, my dearest—I ought to have known——"

"If I say no, it almost kills me to say it," she sighed. "It cannot be for long—but I will do as Cousin Maverick says—I'll write to Fred. Perhaps by the time he gets the letter, peace may be made."

Two or three tears—the last of the shower—fell from her eyes as she spoke. Jasper saw them, and kissed them away. He made her sit down beside him, and soothed her as a mother does a child. She yielded almost passively to his caresses, her face hidden on his breast, and both her arms clasped about his neck.

"Do you think 'tis a foolish scruple, Jasper?" she said, after a long silence.

"'Tis a very natural one in so high-minded a woman as you," he replied; "but——"

"But what, dear? say all you think," she said, lifting up her head for a moment to see his face.

Jasper smiled, but his eyes were moist.

"I think, my dearest," he said, with an inexpressible tenderness in his tones, "that if the cause which divides us could not prevent us from loving each other, 'tis perhaps not a sufficient reason either why we should not marry."

"You forget Fred," said Althea sadly. "If he were not now actually in the field, I could better reconcile it to my conscience to be happy. But as it is—if he fell, I should feel as though it was a judgement on me."

"My poor girl!" he said, pressing her closer to his breast, as if he would protect her from her own thoughts. "'Twould be useless to reason with you now, but I hope one day to persuade you that God never requires a useless sacrifice. And I think Fred would say the same. But I do not wonder at your feeling thus, and I'm sorry I spoke—I should have known it would cause you pain."

His right arm was round her waist, and she was clasping his hand with one of hers—she laid the other tenderly on that dear maimed arm which could not embrace her, and with a passionate impulse stooped and kissed the cuff of the empty sleeve which lay just above his heart.

Althea could not get over her scruples, and Jasper did not

try to persuade her out of them. As they took leave of each other, she said—and he never forgot her look as she said it,—“You cannot doubt I love you; but remember that I honour you more—if that were possible—even than I love you, and I would sooner die than tamper with your honour.”

And he replied, much moved,—“’Tis only what I expected of you.”

“Then you do not think,” she said, with a very rainy smile, “that I am a woman of the sort that makes a man a traitor?”

Althea had generously refrained from telling Jasper what Mrs. Maverick had hinted at. He imagined that the good old lady might perhaps have gone so far as to call him a rebel (which he knew she had done before now), but suspected nothing worse, until—a very long time afterwards—Mrs. Maverick herself confessed her sin—artfully accompanying her confession with such a description of Althea’s behaviour on the occasion, as easily obtained his forgiveness.

CHAPTER LXXXIII.

MAJOR DIGBY’S CONCEPTION OF THE POINT OF HONOUR.

IN spite of Commodore Whipple’s ingenious device for rendering St. Michael’s steeple invisible, Charleston was compelled to surrender, and the British army shortly afterwards moved into the Carolinas—where Marion and his men kept up a guerrilla warfare, hiding in the swamps, and beating the saws of the saw-mills into swords. Lord Cornwallis was left in command, and Sir Henry Clinton returned to New York on the first news of the French fleet.

Major Digby’s new regiment was one of those which Sir Henry intended to take back with him, and Digby’s spirits (considerably depressed by several attacks of ague) rose at the prospect of again encountering our natural foes.

He arrived too late to take part in General Knyphausen’s expedition into New Jersey, and he was not sorry for it—these burning and spoiling excursions being not much to his taste. As he observed to André, he thought a gentleman cut a poor figure setting fire to barns and farmhouses, and he did

not care how little he had of such work. If it must be done, it had better be left to the Associators.

Sir Henry, soon after his return, made a feint of going up the North River, which caused General Washington to instantly move up in that direction too. With the extraordinary fatality which attended this war, the capture of an army in the South seemed only to have raised up another in the North. General Washington, who had been too weak all the winter to take advantage of the channels being frozen, was now stronger than ever, and the hostile armies amused one another for several weeks, neither side choosing to risk an engagement.

It was somewhere about this time that Colonel Beverley Robinson one day sent a message desiring Major Digby to step up to his quarters. Colonel Robinson had shown a friendly interest in Fred, ever since he had heard him deliver General Burgoyne's message to Sir Henry. He now asked him whether he had a mind to undertake an important service, whose nature he was not yet at liberty to disclose? The service, he added, involved some considerable risk—

"That, sir, will never deter me," said Fred cheerfully.

Colonel Robinson looked at him rather oddly, and bade him be at Sir Henry Clinton's quarters to-morrow, not later than ten in the morning.

Major Digby was there a good half-hour too soon, and it was another hour before he was sent for. Sir Henry was in the old Beekman House—a fine old Dutch mansion, belonging to a noted rebel.

When at last Major Digby was informed that Sir Henry would see him, he found the General standing by the fireplace, in a room beautifully decorated in blue and gold. He looked up on Digby's entrance, and then resumed his former attitude—his head bent, and his hands behind him. He was a short, rather ungainly man, with a countenance usually expressive of energy and resolution—but he now seemed both embarrassed and undetermined. He was so long before he spoke, and he appeared so much put out (to judge from several impatient movements of foot and hand which he made), that Fred was beginning to debate with himself the propriety of slipping out, and waiting until he should be summoned again, when Sir Henry said suddenly, and with only the glance of an instant towards the young Major,—

"It was you, sir, if I remember right, that brought the message to Fort Montgomery, from General Burgoyne?"

"Yes, sir," said Fred, with a blush of ingenuous modesty, which Sir Henry did not observe. There was another awkward silence. Sir Henry took a turn up and down the room, before he spoke again.

"I understand you are willing to be employed on a service of some danger?" he said at last, taking up his old position in front of the hearth. "Has Colonel Robinson spoke to you on the subject?"

"He only told me, sir, that there was a service to be performed, if any one could be found to be entrusted with it, and he asked me if I chose to have him speak to you for me."

"Then you have no idea of the nature of the service?"

"None whatever, sir."

"Have the goodness to shut the door," said Sir Henry. He threw himself into an arm-chair which stood by the table, and, pointing to another, bade Major Digby be seated.

"The fact is," he went on presently—evidently choosing his words with great care, "the service is of a somewhat delicate nature. You must allow me to observe, Major Digby," he added in a sterner tone than he had hitherto taken, "that not one syllable of this conversation must pass that door"—he pointed to the closed door as he spoke, and, pausing a moment, begged the Major just to step to it, and see that no one was listening.

"The utmost secrecy is necessary," he said, when Fred had reported the coast clear. "One single breath of suspicion will be enough to blast the whole thing; but if it succeeds, 'twill insure the reduction of the Colonies—and, I need hardly add, great rewards to all concerned in it."

Still Sir Henry seemed in doubt how to begin; and he even once more reminded Major Digby that he was upon his honour to reveal nothing, whether he undertook the service or no.

"I trust, sir, you do not doubt my honour!" exclaimed Fred, not a little hurt at this.

"Pooh! pooh! your honour—no! 'Tis your discretion I doubt. You are very young, sir"—here Sir Henry bent his bushy brows severely on Fred's ingenuous but somewhat troubled countenance—"and I doubt very hot-headed——"

Fred was just about to utter a respectful protest, when the

idea struck him that Sir Henry might be testing him, and that in any case, he would best prove he was not hot-headed by appearing as cool as possible.

"Um-m," grumbled Sir Henry. "I see you are not quite without self-control. You are very young, however——"

"I am full five-and-twenty, sir."

"Indeed! you hardly look it. Well, your youthful appearance may serve you here—that is, always supposing you can preserve your self-possession. You will need it, if you engage in this enterprise. The fact is," continued Sir Henry, trying the nibs of all the pens in the inkstand on his thumb nail, and every now and then glancing sharply at Digby, "we have reason to believe—no matter how—that there is an officer in the rebel army who is—who would—in short, who desires to enter into communication with us——"

"Do you mean, sir, that he wants to betray his party?" asked Digby, as Sir Henry seemed to hesitate for an expression.

"Tut, tut, my dear Major Digby, *betray* is not a word to use in this connection! If this was an ordinary war, you might call such a proposal by a hard name; but 'tis highly improper to apply such a word to an officer who regrets past errors, and wishes to return to his duty."

The Major said nothing.

"The name of the officer in question," continued Sir Henry, now seeming more at his ease, "is at present not certainly known to us—though, between ourselves, I may tell you that we have very little doubt as to his identity. If he is the person we imagine, he is in a position, or shortly will be, to render us very effectual assistance indeed. He is deep in the rebel councils—is a man of uncommon personal courage—and has on several occasions shown very considerable abilities in military affairs. His defection alone would be a very great blow to the rebel leaders. But if we accept his proposals, he can do a great deal more for us by remaining where he is, until a favourable opportunity offers of carrying out his plan. He, however, positively refuses to commit himself farther, until some accredited agent from our side is sent to negotiate with him in person."

Having said this much, Sir Henry paused, but presently added; "So stands the case at present; what do you say to it?"

Throughout the interview, Sir Henry had seemed in an irritable mood, and when Digby did not immediately answer he threw himself back, and bringing his fingers together, as his

elbows rested on the arms of his chair, beat an impatient tattoo with the tips—now and then throwing a dubious and not over-pleased glance over his right shoulder at Fred, on whom the full light from the window fell, while Sir Henry's own countenance was half in shadow.

"Well, Major Digby, what do you say?" he asked again. "Of course you understand that I tell you as little as possible at present. If you are entrusted with the mission, you will be put in possession of as much as we know ourselves—which, after all, is not so very much more than I have already told you. Have you nothing to say?"

"In what manner, sir, should I have to act?"

"I've told you—as my accredited agent to this officer."

"You surely, sir, don't mean that I shall go to him openly?" asked Fred, jumping at the hope that he had misunderstood Sir Henry.

"Of course not, man! 'Tis as much as this gentleman's life is worth, to be caught dealing with us! You don't seem to have took my meaning!"

"I'm afraid, sir, I did," said Fred—feeling the room begin to turn round, and surprised at the firmness of his own voice. "I'm afraid, sir, I understand that I am to go as a spy."

"And what if you are? Zounds, Major Digby, what are you thinking about? Have not all nations employed spies in war?"

"Yes, sir; and despised their own, and strung up the enemy's whenever they caught 'em."

"Pshaw! Major Digby, you talk like a schoolboy! I grant you, we despise a common spy—because we believe he will, for a sufficient consideration, alternately serve and betray both sides alike. But a gentleman—a British officer—who goes on a secret errand on his King's service, don't come, I hope, in the same category as a common spy! Of course, we should contrive some plausible errand, to account for your appearance where you're going——"

"May I ask, sir, where that may be?" said Fred. "I trust not to the camp at Middlebrook—for I have some acquaintance with a Boston gentleman, who is at present, I believe, with Mr. Washington's army, and he would infallibly recognise me—and would be very like to suspect a plot."

"Does he think you such a confounded deep fellow?" said Sir Henry, with a momentary relaxing of his frowning brows.

"No; 'twill not be to Middlebrook, I think. Mr. Washington hath shown himself such a stickler for regular procedure, that we might find it difficult to introduce you there under a decent pretext. No,—'tis to Philadelphia you would go in the first instance."

"May I ask, sir, what it is that the rebel officer means to do for us? I mean, will he merely try to sound his countrymen, and persuade 'em to make their peace with His Majesty? or is he really going to—betray 'em?"

"Betray 'em, sir! I've told you already that there can be no treason in his returning to his allegiance!" cried Sir Henry angrily. "The only treason is in his continuing in his rebellion. However, since you will have it, he intends to obtain a certain command—which his services fully entitle him to ask—and so to use it, that further resistance on the part of the rebels shall be hopeless."

Sir Henry had begun very testily; but as the full extent and results of the plan unfolded themselves to his imagination, he went on in a more persuasive tone—

"'Twould be a gross injustice to call such an act treachery. We will waive the consideration that the rebel cause is a bad one. 'Tis enough just now to consider that they must infallibly yield in the end, and that to hasten that conclusion will be to save rivers of blood, the laying waste of cultivated lands, and all the miseries of a protracted and hopeless war. If you look at it thus, you'll see that this gentleman is going to save his country—and I protest, Major Digby, I'm amazed that you see his conduct in any other light!"

"'Tis a pity but what he could have saved his country some other way, sir," said Fred respectfully. Sir Henry laughed.

"Pooh, pooh! you are high-flown! To cut the war short by three or four years—for in a country of so vast an extent as this, we shall have to cut off their armies in detail, and cannot do so without a vast expenditure of blood and treasure—surely this is a legitimate aim! And let me tell you, Major Digby, that there are gentlemen in this army that would jump at the opportunity of bearing a part in so glorious a result—there's a gentleman now, ready to go on his knees to me to send him. Come, come, sir, don't sit there mumchance! Speak out, and let's hear your sentiments!"

"If you command me to speak them, sir," said Fred—

dismally conscious that he was ruining his prospects by every word he said, and yet unable for the life of him to dress up an answer in a more politic form—"It seems to me, sir, that so far as glory goes, 'twill be said that when we wasn't able to beat 'em in the field, we got the better of 'em by underhanded dealings. This officer, whoever he may be, must be a rare scoundrel—and I confess 'twould grieve me to see His Majesty reduced to use so vile an instrument——"

"Upon my word, sir, His Majesty ought to be vastly obliged to you!" said Sir Henry snappishly. "You persist in regarding the rebels as ordinary belligerents! I protest, sir, your sentiments are scarcely loyal! Nay, do not interrupt me—I understand you feel an honourable scruple; but you must learn to look on the thing in its true aspect. His Majesty is mercifully inclined towards his rebellious subjects, and would rather convert them than destroy them. And as for beating 'em in the field, where, pray, have we not beat 'em? At Bunker's Hill, at Long Island, at the Brandywine, at Germantown—to say nothing of my own poor success just now—and I know not at how many more affairs, they've fled like sheep. Washington, 'tis true, cut off that drunken fool Rahl at Trenton—and every man-jack of the rebels clapped his wings and crowed, as if it had been another Minden! And poor General Burgoyne made a sad mess of it with his proclamations and his Indians. But 'twas his vanity undid him—if he would but have took the road by way of Fort George, as Baron Riedesel begged and prayed of him to do, his progress would have been easy. But he must needs force his way through the most difficult part of the country, by way of showing how invincible was his army."

"General Burgoyne, sir, always said as his instructions from home left him no choice as to route, and that ministers intended to strike terror by a successful march in spite of all obstacles," observed Fred—determined not to sit by and hear poor Burgoyne abused.

"At any rate," said Sir Henry, "the catastrophe which overtook that army may teach us not to rely exclusively on the fortune of war, or to be too nice in refusing to avail ourselves of other means. Perhaps you will think the matter over, Major Digby, and let me know in a day or two, if you feel inclined to undertake the business."

Digby had taken his leave, and was going along the

corridor which led to the staircase, when he saw Major André, who was coming along, cheerfully humming an air. Fred fancied that André looked at him with some curiosity, but he only greeted him in passing, and hurried on towards Sir Henry's room. Fred heard the General's voice bidding André come in, just as he himself began to descend the stair.

As André entered, and carefully closed the door behind him, Sir Henry merely turned his head.

"He's a thick-headed young fool, Jack," he said; "but he has wit enough to see that the business is a dirty one, and I have been talking myself hoarse in the vain attempt to persuade him to the contrary."

"Does he decline it, sir?" cried André, with a gleam of joy in his eyes.

"He will, I fear, decline. 'Tis a pity; for his dulness would certainly have disarmed suspicion. He has none of the hang-dog look of a conspirator, and——"

"And I am sure, sir, that I've as little, and you had better send me," said André persuasively. "The ladies tell me I have an ingenuous countenance—and I flatter myself I've rather more discretion than honest Fred Digby."

"I do not know, Jack," said the General, his stern features relaxing as he looked at André's boyish countenance. "Thou art but a boy, and—though thy brains are quick enough, Heaven knows—I'm loth, for thine own sake, to trust thee on such an enterprise."

"Only let me undertake it, sir, and I'll prove to you that youth can be discreet!" cried André gaily. "And I'm older than Digby, at any rate——"

"Ah, Jack, thy youth is of the sort that does not pass off with years," said Sir Henry kindly. He rose and paced up and down the room, while André anxiously watched all the changes of his countenance.

"Thus it shall be, Jack," said the General at last, after taking a good many turns. "If young thickhead will go, thou shalt have the honour of teaching him his lesson—after all, 'tis simple enough"—he added, in a lower tone—"merely to ascertain beyond a doubt whether our friend Mr. G—— is the person we take him for—how much he can and will serve us—and his price. That's the rock Digby will split on, Jack. He is an excellent young fellow, but too dull to grasp the situa-

tion, and see that no man can be a traitor for returning to his duty. If he went, he would scarce, I fear, conceal from Mr. G—— that he thinks him the scoundrel he hath just been calling him."

"'Tis an advantage taken in war!" said André eagerly. "And in the present instance, 'tis out of all comparison better that we should outwit the rebels, and, having got them completely in our power, grant 'em most of their demands, than that we should crush them by sheer force, and be hated by 'em ever after."

"My dear Jack, thy head is old, if thy face is young," said the General, laying his hand on the young man's shoulder. "If young high-flown don't swallow his scruples, thou shalt go, Jack! And yet I am loth to have thee go—I love thee, Jack, and I would not have thee come to harm."

"'Twill be easy, sir, to concoct such a plan as will render that impossible. I can think of a hundred pretexts this moment!"

"One will do, Jack, one will do," said Sir Henry, smiling at his eagerness, yet evidently uneasy. "'Twill be a ticklish business," he added thoughtfully; "there's the danger of a counter-plot to be guarded against—and young thickhead, I fear, could scarce be depended on to see through a nine-inch board. Yet I'm loth to risk thee, Jack. Well, let us to the business of the day."

When Major Digby presented himself to his Commander-in-Chief for the second time, it was with as near an approach to trepidation as a British officer can decently be supposed to feel. He was received by Sir Henry rather coldly.

"Well, Major Digby," he said, looking up from a letter which he seemed to be revising—for his pen was in his hand, "have you reflected on the subject of our conversation?"

"Yes, sir," said the unhappy Fred—who felt that Sir Henry meant to make the interview as difficult as possible.

"And what decision have you arrived at?"

Sir Henry asked this question merely for form's sake—he had read the answer legibly inscribed on the Major's too ingenuous countenance, from the first instant of his entering the room.

"I—I——" he stammered.

Sir Henry removed his eyes from Major Digby's facial struggles long enough to dip his quill in the ink-pot, and then

once more fixed them expectantly on that unfortunate young man.

"You have decided?" he said, with an ominous mildness.

"I—I——" stammered Fred again, and then broke out in desperation. "God knows, sir, if it was anything else, and the danger a hundred times greater, I would not hesitate an instant—but, dress up the situation as I will, sir, I see that I should be a spy, come to tamper with an officer's fidelity. I should betray myself—my sense of the vileness of my errand would unman me——"

"I understand you, Major Digby; you think if you was discovered, your neck would be in danger," said Sir Henry sarcastically.

"'Tis not that, sir—though of course no man wants to be hanged as has ever had the chance of being shot," protested Fred. "I think, sir, no General I ever had the honour to serve under thought me a coward—and if you would be pleased to send me on any service of a different nature—if 'twas to certain death"—here Fred was fairly overcome, and the tears ran out of his eyes—"you should see, sir, that 'tis not my life I value!"

"Come, come, do not distress yourself, Major Digby," said Sir Henry, touched, in spite of his vexation, by the young fellow's appeal. After all, he reflected, Digby would never have done—he was right there—he would infallibly betray himself. "I respect the delicacy of your sentiments, Major Digby," he said aloud. "And we all know your courage is above question. But all is fair in war, especially when that war is a wicked and obstinate rebellion. However, there's a gentleman of this army—whose honour I'm sure you would admit to be unimpeachable—who would, as I told you yesterday, go down on his knees for the chance you have refused, and I've no doubt but he will be employed on the business. I have only to remind you once more that *absolute* silence must be observed as to the whole matter—the slightest breath reaching Mr. Washington's ears would suffice to ruin the whole scheme."

"Perhaps I've been a fool," thought Fred, as he walked up and down Broadway that evening, in the lowest depths of melancholy. "It may be a good thing in the end. But if I was to meet Jasper Fleming, or Mary, when I was on such an errand, I should fairly die with shame."

CHAPTER LXXXIV.

IN WHICH MAJOR DIGBY'S IMAGINATION RUNS AWAY
WITH HIM.

COLONEL FLEMING took part in most of the indecisive movements around New York, during the summer of 1779. He wished to accompany the expedition to the Penobscot, but, fortunately for him, General Washington (who was always on the watch for a fair opportunity of attempting New York) desired him to remain with his regiment in the Jerseys. It was confidently expected that D'Estaing and Lincoln would soon take Savannah, and that the French fleet would then immediately sail for New York. Sir Henry Clinton hastily withdrew all the troops from Newport and the forts on the Hudson, and both sides anxiously awaited the result of the siege of Savannah.

By the time that result was known, the winter had set in ; many of the Provincial regiments had broken up, their term of service being ended, and had gone their ways,—one to his farm, and another to his merchandise,—and it was evident that no more could be done that year.

Although it was almost hopeless to get a letter to Savannah, Althea wrote to her brother, as she had promised.

"Col. F.," she said, "has begged me to hurry things on—you'll understand me. My own mind is made up to wait, but Cousin Maverick will have me ask your opinion."

Mrs. Maverick would have been very angry if she had known that Althea said no more than this—but what can one say in a letter which, ten to one, will be opened and inspected by the Captain of the first British outpost it arrives at ? Major Digby got his letter about a year after it was written, it having lain waiting for him most of that time in New York.

Colonel Fleming was several times in Philadelphia during the earlier part of the winter. He had come posting in, as soon as he heard of the Fort Wilson affair ; and (although he soon found that Philadelphia was on the whole safe enough) he showed more temper in speaking of that disgraceful occurrence than Althea had ever seen him display—except about the yet more disgraceful affair of the Penobscot. But on this latter subject he said very little, out of delicacy to Althea, although

the little he did say showed pretty plainly what he thought of Saltonstall's dastardly conduct.

When not in attendance on General Arnold, Noel Branzholm was usually to be found at Mr. Lawrence Fleming's house in Pine Street. It was generally understood that Mary had refused Mr. Graydon's cousin—at any rate, that obtrusive young gentleman now seldom came. This circumstance was a great satisfaction to Noel, who had never thought him good enough for Mary, though he had some superficial accomplishments which pleased at first sight, and might take an inexperienced young woman's fancy.

Noel's own conversations with Mary (which were long and frequent, now that conceited young coxcomb had taken himself out of the way) usually concerned the wrongs of General Arnold. He talked much with Jasper on the same subject, and Jasper entirely agreed with him that Arnold had been shamefully used. Especially did the flagrant injustice of giving Gates all the honours of Saratoga move Jasper's indignation. He had quite as great a contempt for Gates as Noel himself had, and with as good reason—for if Gates had stolen Arnold's honours at Saratoga, he had plotted for years against Washington, his friend and comrade. Jasper even doubted his personal courage—partly influenced perhaps by Wilkinson's affair. "I believe if we was to search into it, we should find that one way or another he's contrived never to come under fire," said Noel. "They say Arnold exposes himself too much—Gates has took good care not to imitate him. When I hear him called the Hero of Saratoga, I can scarce contain myself!"

"He had something happen to him the other day, that I rather fancy must have made him feel awkward," said Jasper; and told his brother with huge gusto that he had lately had a letter from his friend Surgeon Thacher, with an account of an ensign in his regiment, who had been for some time very odd in his manner—wandering about, and talking very wild—sometimes breaking out into ranting appeals to Heaven—at others saying amazingly witty things, of which he was quite incapable in his ordinary state. One day, this poor fellow wandered up to General Gates's quarters, just as the General had done dinner, and, after making them all laugh with his oddities, suddenly clasped his hands, cast up his eyes, and devoutly prayed that Heaven would be pleased to pardon the General, for having tried to supersede that God-like man Washington!

"Thacher says Gates was monstrous disconcerted," said Jasper with infinite enjoyment, "and bade his aide get the poor fellow away as quick as he could. I wish I had been there to see it!"

In repulsing the attempt to surprise Washington's advanced posts in the Jerseys in the summer of 1780, Colonel Fleming was actively employed, his regiment being sent (along with General Branhholm's brigade) to support Greene, when the first attack was threatened on Springfield. On the second attack—although Greene was too weak to create a diversion in time to prevent the town being burned—the British force was glad to retreat instantly after that exploit; and was so hotly pursued that it did not venture to halt at Elizabeth Town, but crossed the same night to Staten Island.

By this time, the French were daily expected, and the misfortunes in the South had only made the North more in earnest. Flagging zeal revived. There is a something in the Anglo-Saxon race which makes it always do its best when hope is lowest—borrowing new courage from despair. The victorious British—of that race too—forgot this, along with all the other things that they forgot in this sad chapter of their story, and were always astonished when the rebels came on again after a reverse, more resolute than before.

Greatly to Noel Branhholm's surprise, General Arnold (who had lately been in a very despondent way) informed him one morning rather abruptly, that, finding himself still unfit for more active service, he had requested His Excellency to give him the command at West Point.

"Have you anything against it?" asked the General, still more curtly, seeing his secretary look rather blank.

"'Tis a strong post, sir," said Noel, "our strongest—and, with its dependencies, is most vital to us—but I should have thought, sir, as you would have chose rather to command a division in the field. You are now so much recovered——"

"'Tis torture to me to be long at a time on horseback, as you know very well," replied the General angrily, and no more was said.

* * * * *

De Ternay's fleet, with a force under the Count de Rochambeau, arrived early in July, with promises of a much larger armament, under De Guichen, to follow almost immediately. An expedition to Canada, under the Marquess La Fayette (who

returned to America with Rochambeau) was talked about; and things began to look very black for the British army shut up in New York. Major Digby's usually cheerful countenance became so downcast, that André rallied him on it. "I vow, Digby, I'll keep a register of the length of your phiz!" he said. "'Twill be as good as a barometer!"

Major André himself was in even better spirits than usual. He scoffed at the French, and he was just then engaged in making most admirable fun of the rebels. The redoubtable General Wayne (who surprised poor Johnson at Stony Point, last summer) had just been signally repulsed in an attack on a blockhouse at Bull's Ferry. Major André had composed a mock-heroic poem on this occasion, which was being published in *Rivington's Gazette*, and which he had called "The Cow-Chase," as the attack had had for its object to carry off some cattle.

"I've improved that verse about his Generalship's nag," says André. "Come, man, clear up that anxious brow, which don't become so ruddy a countenance as yours—and tell me if it don't run smoother now:—

' His horse that carried all his prog,
His military speeches,
His corn-stalk whisky for his grog,
Blue stockings, and brown breeches—'

What d'ye think of it?"

"Capital!" said Fred. "What a clever fellow you are, Jack!"

"I can't conjure a laugh out of you, though, to-day," said André. "What's got you, Fred? Afraid of the French? Hark ye, my dear boy, a word in your ear; I will give you a text of Scripture for your comfort: *a house divided against itself shall not stand*. Meditate on that, my dear boy, as the parsons say. 'Tis an inspired word."

"They've been falling out in Congress all through the rebellion, and I don't see as we've got much good of it," says Digby rather gruffly.

"We shall yet snap our fingers at 'em all! This is the dark hour before the dawn," says André, and looks mightily inclined to say more; but Fred for once does not encourage him. Ever since he declined to go on that mysterious business, he has had an instinctive desire to know no more about it. He cannot shake off an utterly groundless notion that that business is somehow fraught with calamity—persons whose

ordinary perceptions are rather dull do sometimes take senseless fancies into their heads, and Fred had done so in this case.

"For God's sake, Jack, don't tell me anything!" he cried in a sudden impulse. "If you refer to that business, I think I ought to tell you that—though God knows that warn't why I refused—I'm as certain as I stand here, that if I'd have gone something would have happened to me. And I'll tell you another thing,—mark my words, Jack,—whoever goes on that business will repent it! There's something tells me so—you may laugh if you will; but remember poor Stout. Didn't Stout say he should fall at the Brandywine? 'Tis a warning, Jack, and for God's sake, don't despise it!"

"Pooh, pooh!" said André, who had, however, paled a little, "are you turned dreamer? Is Saul among the prophets? You're hipped, my dear fellow! As for any risk in this affair—there was a thousand times more when I went into Charleston—not that they would have durst touch my person even there."

"'Tis my opinion, Jack, if you care to have it, as Mr. Washington durst do anything," said Fred solemnly. "But anyway, we're in a mess." To which André replied, that he saw Fred had never got over the effect of poor Burgoyne's disaster, but that that could never occur again.

Major André's hopeful views were very shortly confirmed. Instead of De Guichen's fleet appearing off Sandy Hook, there came news that he was gone home to France to refit his ships!

The wrath of the Provincials at this desertion, as it appeared to them, was very great. It was said that even His Excellency had expressed himself in no measured terms. As for General Arnold, he had always been against looking to France for aid, and, although deeply disgusted, he did not seem to be much surprised.

The General was just setting out for West Point, leaving his wife and her infant son to follow him, as soon as a house should be ready for their reception. He reached General Washington's camp, between Haverstraw and Tappan, just as the army was crossing the Hudson. His Excellency had determined to venture on attacking New York in concert with De Rochambeau, and was moving across the river in order to be ready. The last division was crossing—and presently they saw His Excellency himself on horseback watching the embarkation.

After the usual compliments had passed between them,

General Arnold asked His Excellency if any place had been reserved for himself?

"Yes; the post of honour—the left wing," says His Excellency. Noel looked at his General in triumph, as much as to remind him that now he would soon be able to silence his enemies for ever. But the General's face puzzled him. Noel would have said that it had fallen at His Excellency's words, if it had not been impossible to suppose such a thing. He understood it a little better, when, as they rode on together, the General complained that he still felt his wound very troublesome, and said that it would certainly not allow him for a long while to come yet to be many hours at a time in the saddle.

CHAPTER LXXXV.

IMPORTANT SERVICES OF MR. JOSHUA H. SMITH.

I come ripe with wrongs.

VENICE PRESERVED.

WHEN he first came to West Point, General Arnold appeared to be much depressed in spirits. Noel attributed this partly to his wound, which still occasionally troubled him, and to the lameness which must be so peculiarly irksome to a man of unusual strength and activity; but still more to the fact that he allowed his mind to dwell on the public dishonour (for so he persisted in regarding the reprimand) which Congress had put upon him. As Mrs. Arnold had not yet arrived, the first few days were somewhat lonely, except for the visits paid and received by Counsellor Smith of Haverstraw. But the Counsellor—whose brother was Chief Justice of New York, and whose family were all in the Tory interest—was suffering from a sharp attack of ague, and was sometimes too much indisposed to come as far as headquarters—which were at Colonel Beverley Robinson's house, opposite West Point, and some eight or ten miles higher up the river than Haverstraw.

On evenings when Mr. Smith did not come, the General would beg Major Branzholm to give him his arm, and, leaning heavily on it, would walk for an hour or so on the high level plateau on which the house stood, whence there was a fine view up and down the river.

On these occasions, Noel usually played the part of comforter. He believed that the General's morbid state of mind was at least partially owing to his physical sufferings. At the time the charges were brought against him, he had been still sufficiently incapacitated for active exertion, to have ample leisure to brood over his wrongs, and Noel hoped that, now he was in a great measure recovered, he would regain his mental balance. For a day or two, however, he seemed more despondent than Noel had ever yet seen him. "I doubt I shall never be fit for active service again," he said one evening, as they paced slowly before the house-door. "Would to Heaven, I had died on Bemis' Heights! My enemies would perhaps have done me justice dead—and I should have been spared public dishonour——"

"A mere formal reprimand after all, sir; a bone flung by Congress to the Council," said Noel.

"But an indelible dishonour—and by a refinement of cruelty conveyed to me by the lips I honour most of all on earth. *Washington* was compelled to condemn me!"

"The hardest word he used, sir, was 'imprudence'——"

"An indelible dishonour all the same!" repeats the General passionately. "An injury which can no more be wiped out, than this crippled leg can be restored! I had better have let Townshend cut it off; I should have died in a day or two, instead of living to be a cripple—and dishonoured——"

"You walk better every day, sir," says Noel reassuringly. "Yesterday, you was three hours on horseback, and are none the worse of it to-day. In another month, you will be able to take the field. And if you walk a little lame, every step you take will remind your grateful countrymen of that glorious victory, which was chiefly due to your valour."

"And the credit of which was entirely given to that valiant hero, General Gates!" cried Arnold, with the most intense bitterness. "Whilst I was spilling my blood in the thick of the fight, he was safe in his tent, arguing with a dying man on the lawfulness of our cause! We shall see how he will distinguish himself in the South; *he* will, I fancy, scarce return thence with any honourable scars! Grateful countrymen, do you say? Nay, there's no gratitude in a democracy; republics have ever been ungrateful—and every step I take shall serve to remind me they are so!"

"Dear General, you are too bitter," said Noel—deeply distressed at seeing him in this temper. "Because Pennsylvania

has wronged you, will you forget all else? What General is more beloved than you, in all the army?"

"Yes, I think the soldiers would have followed me," said Arnold, with so poignant a regret in his tone that Noel was startled.

"I'm certain you're indisposed, sir," he said anxiously. "Have you walked too long? Does your wound hurt you?"

"No—except the one which rankles in my heart," said the General gloomily; and then, as if to turn the conversation, he added abruptly,—"Branhholm, did you ever hear talk of the Duke of Marlborough?"

"Do you mean the great General, sir, that beat the French?"

"Yes; do you know no more about him than that?"

"I'm afraid, sir, I aint studied history as much as I should," said Noel modestly; "but I know he was a very great General, and won the battle of Blenheim——"

"Then you never heard that he was also a very great traitor?"

"No, sir! Was he really though? Who did he betray?" asked Noel, much amazed.

"He betrayed everybody he could," said Arnold with cutting emphasis. "He betrayed King James to King William; and then he tried to betray William back again to James. But he was, as you say, a very great General, and won the battle of Blenheim; so he was made a Duke, and was thought the greatest man in all England—and, as you see, his treasons are so entirely forgot, that you had never so much as heard of 'em."

"I always thought he was a very great man, sir, certainly," said Noel. "But if he was a traitor——"

"Pshaw! he only betrayed Kings—a sound republican need not waste sympathy on them," said the General, with an ironical sneer.

"I thought William the Third was a good King," said Noel, considerably perplexed by this new view of the great Duke; "and treason is always hateful—Dear sir, do let us turn back, I'm sure your leg hurts you, though you won't own it; you are turned so pale!"

"No, no, 'tis nothing. We will stand here a moment; I will rest a little on your shoulder."

As the General stood thus, his arm a little raised—as Noel was the taller—the latter was struck by the pain expressed in

his face. He still, however, refused to admit that he was suffering from anything but fatigue; but he presently himself proposed that they should return to the house.

It was a beautiful evening. Below them, the plateau sloped down, with rocky boulders and woody knolls, to Beverley Dock. Opposite, lay the fortifications of West Point; and the river, broadening out to north and south of the Point, lay like a flood of silver in the summer twilight. Behind the house, rose the great peak of the Sugar Loaf Mountain. All was silence, except for the occasional cry of a bird in the woods, and a human voice calling for the ferryman, and plainly heard through the clear air. A boat was just rounding the farthest point below, and coming up-stream.

"What a scene of repose!" said the General, stopping to admire it. "Who would think what tremendous forces—of human invention and human passions too—are sleeping among these peaceful-seeming hills! The place is a volcano—as quiet now as the summer's evening itself, but ready to break out in fire and smoke at any hour!"

"'Twas a pity the Council did not let me alone," he said presently. "I should not have troubled them long. If I had carried out my plan, I should have made West New York another Paradise, like Schuyler's. When I see this beautiful landscape, and think of what might have been, I tell you, Branhholm, my heart is like to break."

"It may all be yet, sir, when the war is over," said Noel earnestly. "You will yet show yourself as wise and indefatigable in settling up a country, as you have already shown yourself heroic in defending one."

"Never!" said Arnold. "Never now—'tis too late! You know not how those bitter drops of gall have poisoned all my blood. Men that have been so persistently pursued by injustice as I have been, know not what they do!"

"General Schuyler, sir, has been almost as hard used as you; his services have been great, and so have his losses—but he has been a mark for faction from the first——"

"Ah, he's a better man than I am," said the General, with a heavy sigh. "But he was not delivered over to the Council of Pennsylvania hounded on by Joseph Reed, and dragged to trial, when he was scarce able to stand for wounds received in his country's service." He spoke with the same intense bitterness which Noel had so often noticed in him of late. "And

yet," he added, in a calmer tone, and as if speaking to himself, "'twould be worse than all the rest, not to be able to meet Philip Schuyler's eye. Washington and he are of such absolute disinterestedness, that——"

He broke off, and taking Noel's arm again, they went slowly towards the house. "You have many friends, sir," said Noel, finding that he did not speak, and seemed to be lost in gloomy reflection. "General Schuyler has always stood by you; and 'tis well known that His Excellency himself has never listened to your enemies, and has always sought to do you justice. And Mrs. Arnold's devotion may surely go far to console you for the malice of a few envious detractors, jealous of your reputation."

"She's an angel; I do not deserve her!" said the General. "Branxholm, I am the most miserable wretch alive! Did you ever think what hell was like? I'll tell you. All hell's in those two words—*too late!* Too late! Too late, indeed!"

"How can it be too late, sir?" cried Noel, distressed and amazed at the General's agitation. "Was you not entirely acquitted of all but a slight indiscretion? And did not his Excellency expressly tell you, only a week since, that he has reserved the post of honour for you?"

"The post of honour! Oh, my God, the post of *honour!*" groaned the General. Then, as if ashamed of displaying so much passion, he calmed himself, evidently by a great effort, and said, wringing Noel's hand as he spoke,—“You have been the staunchest friend that ever man had—but you do not know—you cannot understand. I cannot rise to the heights of disinterestedness of which Washington and Schuyler are capable. I covet honour, and take it hard when my glory is given to another. And then—there's so much else—and all's said in that word I told you of—*too late—too late!* Oh, my God——”

The drops stood on his brow, and as his hand closed convulsively on Noel's, it was deathly cold. It was not the first time that Noel had seen such outbursts—the General was always accustomed to express his feelings pretty strongly—but there was a deep-seated despair to-night in every word and tone, which perplexed his faithful follower as much as it distressed him.

When they reached the house door, the General sat down under the verandah, confessed that his leg hurt him a little, and made an indirect apology for his unreasonable mood, observing

that, finding himself alone here, without Mrs. Arnold, he had allowed his mind to dwell too much on the past. "As soon as she comes, I shall be myself again," he said.

"Yes, sir," replied Noel. "And when we fight the great battle—it cannot be far off now—you will have the place you deserve, and lead us to victory!"

The General had covered his eyes with his hand, and did not seem to have heard. Nor did he see a slight, rather elegant gentleman, approaching from the path which led down to the Dock.

"Here comes Mr. Smith, sir; he must have thrown off his ague," says Noel, recognising the Counsellor's figure by the New York cut of his claret-coloured coat, long before he can see his face.

"I hope I see you well, General," says Mr. Smith, politely removing his hat as he comes up.

"Quite well, I'm obliged to you," replies the General. "Pray be covered, sir, and take a seat. Have you brought me any information?"

"Very little," says the Counsellor, carefully drawing a letter out of the pocket of his nankeen breeches. "Only this. 'Tis, I fancy, from a doubtful source, and not to be trusted to implicitly; but as to-morrow is my day for the shakes, I thought I'd wait upon you with it to-night."

Mr. Smith's manner was extremely polished, and though his sallow countenance showed the traces of sickness, there was nothing slovenly in either his dress or appearance.

The General took the letter which Mr. Smith presented to him, and begged Major Branhholm to have the goodness to send Colonel Varrick to him. Noel could not find Varrick, and returned to say so. By this time, the General seemed to have quite recovered his self-possession. Mr. Smith remained to supper; and the conversation very naturally turned upon the French alliance, about which the General expressed himself very strongly. It was, he said, impossible for a despotic monarch to be the sincere friend of a republic, and he ridiculed the French King—obliged to hob-nob with Dr. Franklin.

"'Tis an unnatural union," he said, "and you'll see that they will jockey us again with the army, as they did with the fleet. D'Estaing got us to equip him at Boston, and then set sail to plunder Granada, instead of going to Georgia to help his allies! Rochambeau and De Ternay, you'll see, will play us the same trick!"

"Depend upon it, Branhholm," said Varrick to him that

night, "the General has a plan in his head, which will make the British dance without a French fiddle to set 'em going. Did you notice his face, when he said at supper that 'twould be a shame if we had all the kicks and the French all the glory? Depend upon it, Smith has got him some information that will enable us to strike a blow at once!"

"I hope so," returned Noel; "but I know no more than you do. The General never says much of what is to be, though he will talk so freely of what has been. Of course he wants to fight—but I fancy for his own sake he would rather it was not just yet—not till he is more recovered. He does not send orders from his tent, like some Generals we know—he leads the attack sword in hand."

"He sat his horse perfectly well yesterday—I watched him carefully," said Varrick. "Oh, for one more day like Saratoga, with him to lead us on!"

"You may say that," cries Noel, kindling. "With Arnold to lead us, we can't be beat! But I wish he may not put much confidence in Smith—I distrust the man, with his oily manners and slippery tongue—and he is besides too nearly related to our enemies."

"For that matter, some say the General is," says Varrick, smiling. "Though who that looks at Mrs. Arnold can remember she was a Tory? But we all think the General tells you more than he does anybody else, and if you don't know, you may rely on it, Smith don't."

"He as good as hinted to me that he did not," replied Noel; "he said to me one day, 'I use Smith, because he is the best hand at getting information, but he carries the letters of Bellerophon, so far at least as not to know what's in 'em.'"

CHAPTER LXXXVI.

HIS EXCELLENCY CROSSES THE HUDSON.

THE General's spirits revived a good deal, as soon as he had sent for Mrs. Arnold, which he did the very next day. He was extremely anxious about her journey, and took a deal of trouble in making out an itinerary—telling her how far to travel each day, and where to stop each night—and beseeching her above everything not to fatigue herself.

Meantime, very bad news was received from the South. Congress had appointed General Gates to that command, when Lincoln was made prisoner at Charleston. He had hardly taken the field, when Lord Cornwallis fell in with him near Camden, on the great Santee River, and totally routed him, with the loss of all his cannon and baggage. Gates had fled, his army was destroyed, and Tarleton was in hot pursuit of Sumter. It was but natural that, on this news coming, General Arnold should have made some cutting remarks at the expense of the unlucky Gates—especially as that hero had crowed somewhat too loud on his arrival in the South, as though the victor of Saratoga had but to come, and see, and conquer. But these reverses made it all the more necessary to do something in the North; and early in September the General told Noel that His Excellency (who had recrossed, and was now at Tappan) would be coming in a few days to see Count Rochambeau at Hartford. "And then," he added, "the blow will be struck."

The General had a scheme in his head for establishing signals as near the enemy's posts as possible. So bold had the news of Camden made Sir Henry Clinton, that a British sloop-of-war had come up the Hudson to within five miles of Verplanck's Point. The General went down in his barge on this errand of the signals, and was a night away, sleeping at Mr. Smith's. On his return, he said that he had been fired on from the British gun-boats, and had had a very narrow escape. He particularly regretted this, as it had prevented his seeing Colonel Beverley Robinson, who had come down to the opposite side of the river, hoping for an interview. Colonel Robinson's property had been confiscated on his taking the British side, and his object in seeking this interview was to try to recover at least a part of it.

The whole affair caused the General some annoyance, as well as a good deal of trouble. On the very day that His Excellency was expected, he went down the river again; this time Major Braxholm accompanied him. At Verplanck's Point, a flag came up from the *Vulture*—the British ship-of-war—with a letter addressed to General Putnam, "or the officer commanding at West Point," so the General of course opened it, and found that it was another letter from Robinson, very urgently entreating an interview.

"I really cannot oblige him by giving up my head-

quarters," says Arnold, looking rather bothered. "Why don't he apply to Congress? They've got plenty of time to attend to him!"

The General took his own barge across to the Ferry, to fetch His Excellency, who had with him the Marquess La Fayette, just returned from France. To Noel's great joy, Jasper was there too, His Excellency having brought him, because he was so well acquainted with Long Island—where it was pretty certain the French force was to land, though of course this was not talked about openly. They dined at Haverstraw, at Mr. Smith's—who was all urbanity. After dinner, General Arnold took an opportunity of laying Colonel Robinson's letter before His Excellency, and asking him whether he thought he might go and hear what Robinson had to say?

"Certainly not," replies His Excellency, glancing over the letter. "'Twould be a very improper thing for the commander of a post to meet any one himself. Send a trusty messenger—Major Branzholm, for instance—if you think any end will be served. But this is a matter for the civil authorities."

Very soon after dinner, they went down to the river, where the barge was waiting. Noel fell behind with his brother, and had so much to ask about Philadelphia (where Jasper had been later than himself), that he heard no more of the conversation between the Generals.

As the barge got well beyond mid-stream, they could see the *Vulture* round the next point.

"That's close quarters," says Jasper, taking Noel's glass, and looking at her. "She can't be more than six or seven miles down. I wish His Excellency may not be running any risk, in coming out here with so small an escort."

"To hear you talk, no one would think how daring you was, brother," said Noel; and Jasper, returning him the glass, observed that he certainly was not daring where His Excellency was concerned.

"If anything should happen to him, we've no one to take his place," he added, still looking uneasily at the *Vulture*. "There's a movement on board of some kind; can you make out what it is?"

By this time, His Excellency was looking too. As he slowly turned his glass, the Marquess said to General Arnold,—

"My General, since you have a correspondence with the enemy, you must find out for us from those gentlemen what has become of De Guichen."

"What do you mean, Marquess?" says the General, not quite pleased at this joke, and with unmistakable anger in his tone.

"He's like that, ever since the court-martial," whispered Noel to his brother. "I sometimes fear 'twill break his heart."

"He'll forget it, when he commands the left wing at New York," says Jasper—almost gaily. "He is to have it—His Excellency told me so. Cheer up, brother! Four years ago, this very day, all seemed lost; but now, even I think a happy end is very near!"

They were at the landing in another moment, and Noel, as he took leave of his brother, said that he supposed by their next meeting it would all be arranged.

"His Excellency is to visit West Point on his return—what joy 'twill be to see you there!" he cried, as he pressed his brother's hand. "There's always something wanting when you're away—I'm but half myself without you!"

"We shall be back in a week, dearest brother," says Jasper. "Keep up a good heart—believe me, there's more justice in the world than you think. Remember the cabal, and how it fell apart like a house of cards!"

And so His Excellency and the Marquess, with their staffs, rode off, and General Arnold went back to headquarters, hardly speaking a word by the way—except to say that he should never be easy until we had done leaning on France.

As soon as he got back, the General wrote a letter to Colonel Robinson, and was desiring Major Branhholm to send him a lieutenant to go with it in the flag-boat, when Noel offered to take it himself.

"You!" says the General—Noel fancied, a little displeased. "But why not, if you choose? There can be no danger."

"Not the least, with a flag, sir," says Noel.

As Noel came under the ship's side, he saw Colonel Robinson (whom he recognised from having seen him often before he went to England, but who did not know him), leaning over the side.

"Who commands at West Point, sir?" asks the Colonel, as he takes the letter.

"General Arnold, sir."

"Indeed? I thought it had been General Putnam," observes the Colonel, opening the letter, and casting his eyes over it.

"Pray, present my compliments to General Arnold, sir, and tell him I'm obliged to him for the trouble he has given himself on my account."

The General went down to Mr. Smith's at Haverstraw next morning, in somewhat better spirits,—it was possible that Mrs. Arnold might get there that afternoon, on her way to West Point. He did not return until next day. As he hoped, Mrs. Arnold had arrived, and he brought her and the child with him in his barge—Peggy in raptures at the beauty of the Hudson, which, on a fine September day, was indeed a fair and noble river.

She brought letters and messages for Major Branhholm from Philadelphia, and the dreary house brightened up amazingly, and became quite a cheerful place, the moment she set foot in it. They were quite a gay party at supper—in the middle of which Mr. Smith came in—on his way down, he said, from Fishkil, whither he had been taking his family for a few days' visit.

"Is that not rather a sudden idea, Mr. Smith?" asks Peggy. "Mrs. Smith said nothing about going away this morning."

To which Smith rejoined that it was a somewhat sudden notion—at least, 'twas an old invitation, but he had made his wife go at this particular time, because, with things so uncertain, and a British sloop so near Haverstraw, 'twas just as well to be a score or so of miles higher up the country.

At this Franks and Varrick exchanged looks with Noel, by which it was easy to see that they were not at all sorry to hear Mr. Smith say things were in an uncertain state.

CHAPTER LXXXVII.

A BOAT TO GO TO THE *VULTURE*.

COLONEL ROBINSON evidently thought he could impose on General Arnold's good-nature to any extent. A very little after sunrise next morning—indeed, before the General was up—a man (who said his name was Sam Cahoun, of Haverstraw) came to headquarters with a letter from Mr. Joshua Smith. So at least he said; but the letter proved to be from the Captain of the *Vulture* complaining that Colonel Robinson had

been fired on, as he was coming off from the ship with a flag to wait on General Arnold.

The General told Major Branhholm these particulars, and added that he wondered what Robinson meant by "waiting upon him." "How can I possibly see him," he asked, much annoyed, "when His Excellency expressly recommended me not? I shall send Smith—Smith is a lawyer, and will be a match for him. However, Smith has given me an inkling of some most important information he thinks he can obtain for me, and I believe I can use Robinson's affair to mask the other."

The General said no more, and of course Noel did not ask anything. The same man came up again in the afternoon, with another note, and shortly afterwards the General went across the Ferry, and Noel saw him mount his horse and turn in the direction of Haverstraw.

General Arnold found Mr. Smith quite alone—his family having gone, as he had said, to Fishkil. The General began at once upon the object of his coming—Smith must go to the *Vulture* to-night, to bring off a person whom it was absolutely essential he should see without delay.

"Surely, General, Colonel Robinson's affairs can wait our convenience?" says Mr. Smith. "'Twas my bad day yesterday—though I did go to Fishkil—and I really aint fit——"

"It must be done—and I can't go myself, after His Excellency's express opinion that 'twould be improper," replied the General. "There's more than Robinson in it—but his business will serve to blind the people of the *Vulture*, and to-night's the time. Trust me to make it worth your while."

"Oh, General, 'tis not that," says Mr. Smith delicately. "But the risk——"

"Risk? pooh! go at night, and if you're challenged by our guard-boats, show your pass."

After some demur, Mr. Smith, finding the General is set upon it, goes out to try and find some one among his tenants to row the boat. The first man he sees is Sam Cahoun.

"Wa'al, Squire, I don' know—I was just a-gwine to fetch the cows"—says Sam doubtfully, when Mr. Smith desires him to come and speak to General Arnold.

When the General had explained what he wanted, Sam shook his head. The job would pretty well take all night, he said—and he had been up all last night—and besides, the guard-boats was out.

"Look you, my man," says the General, bending on him one of those dark looks which few men have been found to resist. "If you're a friend to your country, you'll go."

"I'll go to-morrow, if that'll do," mumbles Sam, wishing himself twenty miles off.

"It must be to-night. To-morrow will be too late for my purpose."

"And then, I can't go alone—the boat's too heavy—and comin' back, we shall have the stream agin us," says Sam; but Mr. Smith suggests that he can go and fetch his brother.

Sam went off very unwillingly, and when he came back, Mr. Smith almost gave up hope. Sam's brother did not like it—and above all, his wife did not like it—there were guard-boats out——

"Guard-boats be d——d!" cries the General angrily. "You've done nothing but harp on them all the time, man! If you don't go, I shall look on you as a disaffected man!"

"Better harp on 'em nor hev 'em put a shot through you," mutters Sam surlily, shifting from one leg to the other.

But however determined Sam Cahoun was not to go, General Arnold was a great deal more determined that he should go. The General had already promised him fifty pounds of flour, and he now sent for the brother—who, however, at first seemed more obstinate than Sam. They were both homely farming-men, lean and sunbrowned; but the brother (whose name was Joe) was the more quick-witted of the two, and he needed a deal of persuasion before he would consent to steal off under cover of darkness, on an errand which could, he fancied, be done just as well by day.

"Well, Joe Cahoun, I hope you're going to oblige the General," says Mr. Smith, meeting him just outside the house. "Just sit down a moment on this bench, and listen to me, and I'll explain it to you." There was a little rustic table in the porch, with bottles and pewter mugs upon it.

"Take a tot, Joe; take a tot, Sam," says Mr. Smith, mixing them each a dram. "'Tis a warm day, and talking's dry work. As for this business, there's no danger in it whatever. I've got a pass from General Arnold—here 'tis—look at it—to go at any time of night or day. And to prove to you that I'm in the confidence of headquarters, I'll tell you in your ear that the countersign for to-night is *Congess*—I know I can trust you."

"You can trust me, Squire," says Joe—fidgeting about in a pair of soiled shirt-sleeves, and then suddenly resting his bristly chin in the hollow of his hand, and appearing to be feeling how many days old his beard is—while Sam stands by in silence, looking as if he didn't like all this, but didn't know what to say to it. "You can trust me, Squire, right enough," repeats Joe, working away at his chin all the while. "You can trust me—but that aint the p'int; the p'int is, why must you go by night? Why can't a flag go by day?"

"Why, you owl, d'ye think we want all the country to find out how we get our information?" says Mr. Smith, provoked. "A thing that's known is sure to get talked about. We don't want the privates to know anything about this. Look ye here, Joe, aint I a friend to the country? Aint you always heard so?"

"Oh, yes, Squire, I've heerd so," replies Joe, grinding his chin harder than ever, and displaying a row of long yellow teeth; "but there's your brother's a rank Tory—and don't yer see——"

"Can I help what my brother is? Who is there that aint got a brother, or a cousin, or a something or other, a Tory, I should like to know?" says Mr. Smith tartly. "The General's whole plan depends on getting this information to-night. Just stop there a minute, while I go up and speak to him."

In about ten minutes, the General himself came out. He walked slowly and heavily, and his manner was very thoughtful, and a little absent.

"Mr. Smith tells me you don't like the secrecy," he said, sitting down opposite Joe, and looking very hard at him. "There must be secrets in war, as you know very well. However, so far as that goes, the officers at the Ferry and the Captain of the water-guard, know all about this affair, and Major Kierce was to have sent me a boat if he could—'tis his failure brings us to you."

"Wa'al, Gen'ral," says Joe, getting up and slowly straightening out his back, "I'll go. I don't like the job, but I'll go."

And (while the General returns indoors with Mr. Smith) the other two go off to make arrangements, and get a sheep-skin to muffle the oars.

CHAPTER LXXXVIII.

ADVENTURES OF MR. JOHN ANDERSON.

WHEN Mr. Joshua Smith stepped into the boat, waiting for him at the creek with his two unwilling watermen, night had fallen on the hills of the Highlands. There was no moon and no wind; not a ripple broke the broad bosom of the Hudson. Here and there, far up in the hills, a light gleamed in some solitary house; but these were few and far between—all on earth was dark, and only heaven was full of eyes.

"We are lucky to have no moon!" observed Mr. Smith, as the men settled to their oars. But Sam Cahoun only grumbled something about the tide being against them, both going and coming; and Joe added that it was a pity but Mr. Smith had not put on a dark greatcoat, as that white one of his would to a dead certainty bring out the guard-boats after them.

No such thing happened, however. The muffled oars rose and fell, and the hills lay dark and silent on either side. They had passed the Clove, and could make out the hull of the sloop, as she lay just above Teller's Point.

"Row on, as if you meant to pass her," whispered Mr. Smith, who was steering; but the *Vulture* hailed them.

"Who goes there?" cried a voice from the deck.

"Friends—going from King's Ferry, and bound for Dobbs' Ferry," answered Mr. Smith, and was immediately ordered alongside; and the tide running so strong that the boat did not at once obey, the officer of the watch threatened to blow them out of the water, if they did not haul alongside that instant.

"You shall be answerable, sir, for delaying me!" cries Mr. Smith angrily, loud enough to be heard at Teller's Point—so loud, that a boy comes up from the cabin to say that whoever it is, is to come below and speak to the Captain.

Mr. Smith on this goes up the ship's side, and is taken down to the cabin, where he finds the Captain lying ill in his berth, and with him a gentleman in regimentals, who politely begs Mr. Smith to be seated.

"I come, sir, with a message to Colonel Beverley Robinson," begins Mr. Smith.

"I am he, sir," says the polite gentleman. "Allow me, sir,

to present you to Captain Sutherland. Have you come alone, sir?"

"Quite alone, Colonel, except for the men that rowed me," replies Smith. "I believe, sir, I'm to take a gentleman ashore."

"To tell you the truth, sir, I expected another person. I've not the honour, sir, of knowing whom I'm addressing——"

"I am Joshua Hett Smith, sir, of Haverstraw," says Smith, bowing politely.

"Brother, I believe, to Mr. Justice Smith—I am happy, sir, to make your acquaintance"—here the Colonel politely bows. "You'll excuse me, sir, for saying I'm a little surprised to see you. I fully expected—but no matter. If you'll excuse me, sir, I'll be with you again directly."

While Colonel Robinson is gone, Mr. Smith takes the opportunity of complaining to the Captain about the firing on flags of truce, and is still on this subject when Robinson returns, bringing with him a young gentleman whom he introduces as Mr. John Anderson.

"I am indisposed myself," observes the Colonel, "but Mr. Anderson will do as well—he is to represent me entirely in the business."

Mr. Anderson is all ready for his midnight expedition, dressed in a large blue watch-coat, which hides everything but a pair of handsome white top-boots. He is a fair young man, with very lively blue eyes, and he steps lightly down into the boat, seeming rather glad to get away from Robinson, who hovers about him, evidently in a terrible fidget.

"I shall be back in the morning, Colonel, before you're out of your berth—trust me for that," he says, shaking him by the hand. Then he skips down into the boat, which is bobbing up and down on the flood-tide, so that Sam and Joe Cahoun have to stand up all the while and keep her off the ship's side with their hands.

Not a word was said as they rowed to shore. They landed at the foot of the Long Clove, a steep cliff covered with thick bushes. Some one was moving in these bushes, and Smith, begging the stranger to wait there an instant, went up the bank. He returned almost immediately. "You'll find Mr. G—— up there," he said in a very low voice; and the stranger went up, while Mr. Smith asked the men to wait and take him back to the ship.

But this both Joe and Sam refused point-blank. They were tired, they had been up all the night before, and rest they must have. Finding them obstinate, Mr. Smith had the boat made fast, and took them up to his house, where they soon forgot the toils and dangers of the night, in the sleep of the labouring man.

Mr. Smith, however, did not feel at liberty to go to bed, while there was Mr. John Anderson to be got back to the *Vulture*. Although the night air was telling cruelly on his ague, an hour or so before dawn he saddled his horse, and rode down to the Clove, where he found Mr. Anderson still in close confabulation with Mr. G——.

"'Tis of course too late for Mr. Anderson to return to the sloop," observes Mr. Smith, when he has threaded his way through the thick bushes. "And 'tis high time you came up to my house. The day is beginning to break, and people will be about."

"I've still much to say to Mr. Gustavus," says Mr. Anderson, "so perhaps we were best do as you propose."

It is still so dark, that Mr. Anderson cannot see the features of Mr. Gustavus, but as they go towards their horses, there is just light enough to see that he is lame, and walks on the rough ground with a good deal of difficulty.

"Take my servant's horse, Mr. Anderson," says Mr. Gustavus. As they ride up the four miles to Mr. Smith's house, a sentinel challenges them, and Mr. Gustavus gives the word.

"Good God! am I within the American lines?" says Anderson, in a low voice to Mr. Gustavus.

"You will be perfectly safe at Haverstraw," returns Gustavus. "'Tis but one day's detention—to-night you shall return."

Just as they arrived at Mr. Smith's (by which time it was broad dawn), they heard firing in the direction of Teller's Point.

"That's cannon!" exclaims Anderson. Mr. Gustavus—there is light enough now to see that he is no other than General Arnold himself—seems annoyed, and says he has no doubt it is Livingston firing at the sloop—he sent up yesterday to ask for some four-pounders on purpose, "which," he adds, "I did not give him." They can see the *Vulture* from the windows of Mr. Smith's house—which command a magnificent prospect.

"Good God! she's aground!" cries Anderson, turning very

pale. No one else speaks, until the General says—after what seems an age of watching——

"They've got her off—just in time. That was a narrow squeak."

They watch the sloop, putting about and falling farther down stream.

"This is an unlucky hitch," says the General, taking Smith aside. "I've still a great deal to hear from him, however. See that we are not disturbed. You must keep him till night. I must be at headquarters by ten, and after that I charge you with him."

"What is he?" asks Smith. "He looks a mere boy. I wonder they sent such a soft young fellow on such a ticklish errand."

"He's a clever fellow in his way," replies the General. "He's a merchant—but, as you see, he must needs borrow a uniform from an officer in New York, to make himself look like a soldier."

Mr. John Anderson is still anxiously watching the *Vulture*, when Smith goes away to snatch a little sleep, and leaves them together, promising to return before the General goes.

When he comes back, the table is strewn with papers.

"One moment, Mr. Smith, and I am done," says the General—giving him a look, which Mr. Smith takes as a hint to retire again.

At last, however, the General is ready. By this time, Mr. Smith has something to tell him—he has sent down and ascertained that Colonel Livingston has undoubtedly driven the *Vulture* down the river, and Mr. Anderson must return to New York by land. Besides the danger of getting in the way of a cannon-ball, the alarm has been given, the guard-boats are all on the alert in good earnest now, and 'twould be impossible to pass them.

"I'll ride half the night with him over land, but I'll not try the water, now the alarm's given," concludes Smith, who has got his ague upon him, and is shaking from head to foot. "We must cross from King's Ferry to Verplanck's."

At this the General looks very strange. "Oblige me, Mr. Smith, by leaving Mr. Anderson and me alone for a few moments," he says, biting his lips.

It is full an hour before the General calls him back, and when he comes, he perceives that both Mr. Anderson and the

General are a good deal excited. Mr. Anderson's manner is more resolute than at first, but he is much flushed; and the General has an air of annoyance—as near to uneasiness as Mr. Smith has ever observed in him.

"If you really can't get off by water—but you must try it, Smith," he says—and then turning suddenly to Anderson, exclaims that the risk is too great.

"I think, sir, as I've already said," says Anderson boldly, "I ought to be judge of that. I accept the risk."

The General looks from him to Smith, and from Smith to him again. "Then you must change that coat, Mr. Anderson," he says very decidedly. "Mr. Smith will lend you a coat—he's much about your size. I've drawn you up a route—remember above all, *not* to go by way of Tarrytown! You've got my pass."

Having reiterated these injunctions, and made Mr. Anderson promise to sacrifice his borrowed martial plumes, the General departs, leaving Anderson to admire the prospect, and wish himself once more safe aboard the *Vulture*.

CHAPTER LXXXIX.

FURTHER ADVENTURES OF MR. JOHN ANDERSON.

MR. ANDERSON was persuaded to get into a tight-bodied coat of Mr. Smith's, which had been handsome when new—it was claret-coloured, and the button-holes were worked in gold tinsel—but was now worn rather threadbare. With this garment over his nankeen waistcoat and breeches, a pair of thread stockings, and a small round tarnished beaver, he looked more like a reduced gentlemen than a New York merchant. His light hair was unpowdered, and merely tied in a queue with a plain ribbon. Mr. Smith surveyed him carefully.

"Your boots, sir, don't quite match the rest of your costume," he observed; but Mr. Anderson vowed he could not change them. Then he put on his watch-coat over all, and said that he was ready.

Mr. Smith took a negro servant with him, and at a little past six o'clock they all set out.

A little before they reached Stony Point (where the King's Ferry crosses the Hudson), they overtook a gentleman, who

proved to be Major Burroughs, to whom Mr. Smith casually said that he was going up to West Point for Mrs. Smith, and invited him to Haverstraw to tea next afternoon.

"Nothing like putting a bold front on it," says Smith to Anderson, as they are riding on. "We must not seem too much engrossed in our own affairs."

For all this, however, Mr. Smith rode at a good pace, and they got to King's Ferry by the time it was dark. On the way down to the landing-stairs they passed a marquee, where some officers were drinking.

All this while, every step they took was carrying Mr. Anderson farther away from his destination. It was no doubt the irksome sense of this which made him so dull and uneasy. And when Mr. Smith observed, on nearing this temporary way-side tavern, that these would be Colonel Livingston's officers over from Verplanck's, the information did not raise Mr. Anderson's spirits. But for Colonel Livingston, Mr. Anderson would at this very moment be rowing comfortably down towards the *Vulture* instead of being compelled to make this tedious and perilous circuit by land. He would not go in with Smith—he rode on down towards the Ferry stairs—hearing, as he did so, a chorus of voices greeting Smith.

"Why, Jo Smith," calls one, holding out a bowl, "is that you? Won't you drink?" But as the bowl is empty, Mr. Smith calls for some refreshment on his own account, and dismounts to drink it.

"What do you think, Daddy Coolley," he asks his somewhat inhospitable friend, "of our being in New York in three weeks' time, eh?"

"I'm afraid not, Master Joshua," returns the other, shaking his head. "If we're there in three months, I reckon we may think ourselves lucky."

"Corny Lambert," says Mr. Smith to a waterman who is loafing in the tent, while his grog is being mixed, "I want to go over to Verplanck's, and I'm in a hurry. Get your men, and be putting our horses into the boat, will you?"

Just at this instant, Colonel Livingston himself comes out of the marquee, and asks Mr. Smith to come in and have supper.

"I can't, I thank you, Colonel," returns Smith, swallowing his grog. "I've got a gentlemen with me that's pressed for time—he's rode on now."

"Fetch him back, and both of you stay to supper," says

Livingston—who little imagines how ill a turn he did the gentleman this morning.

Mr. Smith excused himself again, and in answer to a question, said that he was going up to General Arnold's headquarters, whereupon Livingston begged him to take charge of a letter to the General.

The ferrymen had by this time shipped the horses, and Mr. Smith found Mr. Anderson impatiently waiting for him on the stairs. Smith was all the better for that sip at the flowing bowl. He was quite jovial as they crossed; he joked with the boatmen, and promised them something to revive their own spirits. Mr. Anderson sat silent at the side—and made no answer, even when Smith stepped aft to whisper to him that the river was the Rubicon—they were all right now.

Arrived at the other side, Mr. Smith was as good as his word—he gave Corny Lambert an eight-dollar bill, which, even allowing for Colonial money being depreciated to half its value, was very handsome pay.

They mounted their horses again, and had ridden about eight miles from Verplanck's, when they were stopped by the sentry at an outpost of Sheldon's Light Dragoons. Mr. Smith asked who commanded the party, and was informed that it was Major Boyd.

"Who wants me?" says the Major himself, overhearing the question, and coming out of the guard-house.

"I am Joshua Smith, Major; I live in the white house on the other side King's Ferry, and am going to Major Strang's," says Mr. Smith quite glibly.

"Major Strang is not at home, sir," rejoins the Major. It is by this time between eight and nine o'clock, and quite dark.

"Dear me, how very unfortunate!" exclaims Mr. Smith, and then, after thinking for a moment, he adds to his companion,—“I'll tell you what we'll do, then—we'll go to old Colonel Gil Drake's; he's an old friend of mine, and will, I'm sure, give us a bed for to-night.”

"He don't live where he did—he's moved to Salem," observes Major Boyd.

"May I ask the favour of a word with you, Major?" says Smith mysteriously. "I'm on General Arnold's business," he whispers, "and must press on. The gentleman with me is a person going to White Plains, to meet a gentleman on public business. He's got a pass from the General."

The Major gets a light to look at it, remarking that they had better sleep at Andreas Miller's at Crompound, close by—the roads are dangerous at night.

"We must do it," whispers Smith to Anderson. "I'm dead beat. I said I'd ride half the night; but 'tis pretty hard on a man with a tertian ague on him, I can tell you!"

As Major Boyd is carefully examining the pass, Mr. Anderson asks him the best way to go to White Plains.

"Not by Tarrytown," replies the Major, returning the pass. "There's been a party of between twenty and thirty cowboys heard of over that way, within these last few days. Go by North Castle Church."

"Depend upon it, you'd better follow the General's directions," says Smith, as they ride on to Andreas Miller's; "you can't improve upon 'em."

Mr. Anderson, who has hardly said a word all the way, does not answer. He is, thinks Smith, in a sad funk, for all he is so fond of going a-masquerading in his friends' uniforms. They sleep together in the same bed, and what with Smith's ague and Mr. Anderson's restlessness, they neither of them get much sleep.

With the first streaks of dawn, Anderson has Smith up, and they ride on to Pine's Bridge, where, a little beyond, the roads diverge to North Castle and Tarrytown.

"You're fairly in the Neutral Ground now, Mr. Anderson," says Smith; "we've passed our lines; there's no more patrols, nor guards, nor sentinels to stop you now."

"Thank Heaven for that!" cries Mr. Anderson in a tone of the most profound relief. "I protest, I was never so uneasy in my life, as I've been ever since I heard that confounded cannon fired by your Colonel what's-his-name at Verplanck's! It sounded in my ears like a funeral-bell! I really wouldn't have believed it possible I could have been so fanciful! 'Tis a misfortune, I really think, to possess an imagination—one conjures up a thousand disagreeable images, and suffers a thousandfold more, I'm convinced, than the common mind. I've a friend in New York, now, that would, I'm convinced, have gone through last night's adventures with a thousandfold more stoicism than I! A brave, honest fellow, without a particle of imagination——"

Here Mr. Anderson checked himself, as though struck by some sudden thought, and seemed for a moment a little damped. But he recovered himself immediately.

"'Tis amazing," he said, "how a sentence or a word will sometimes recur to the mind, and assume an importance out of all proportion to its merits. This very same unimaginative friend of mine once said a thing to me which, was I inclined to be superstitious, might have caused me considerable apprehension, had I happened to recollect it while I was within your lines. Well, sir, what say you to breakfast? I feel a something here that cries cupboard, and I fancy you must be fainting."

"We might get something at Mrs. Underhill's," returns Smith—quite amazed at this sudden transmogrification of Mr. John Anderson into a gay talkative young gentleman.

Mr. Anderson's high spirits almost made Mr. Smith forget his *ague*. Mrs. Underhill gave them but a frugal repast; but Mr. Anderson so enlivened it with his conversation on poetry and literature, that Mr. Smith began to think him a very superior young man indeed.

"Here, I think, I may safely leave you," says Smith, when he has seen Mr. Anderson nearly to the fork of the roads. "I shall tell Mr. Gustavus that I left you within hail of your friends."

And so, with mutual compliments, thanks, and apologies—and reminders on Smith's part to be sure and take the road to the left—they part, and Mr. Smith and his servant ride back towards Crompound, while Mr. Anderson goes on to the meeting of the roads, and pauses there, considering whether it would not be better after all to go by Tarrytown? The cowboys are on the Tory side, and, upon the whole, he would be rather glad than sorry if he *did* fall in with them. Better at any rate than falling in with a party of skinners! He sits there on his horse, debating with himself which road he shall take—North Castle or Tarrytown—to the left or to the right? It is scarce a matter of life and death after all, he is almost among friends, the worst danger is past.

Which road will you take, John Anderson? There is a great deal more than life or death hangs on your choice!

His choice is made. He will take the Tarrytown road.

CHAPTER XC.

HOW JOHN PAULDING MISSED THE PIGEON BUT HIT THE CROW.

MR. JOHN ANDERSON drew his right-hand bridle-rein, and turned his horse's head into the road leading to Tarrytown—as he had had it in his heart to do, ever since Major Boyd gave his well-intentioned warning. The cowboys, at the worst, would only carry him off to New York, and the first Captain of a vidette that saw them would set him free. Even if Major Boyd had told Mr. Anderson what those particular cowboys had done the night before, he would not have been much afraid to meet with them.

While Mr. Anderson was being rowed from the *Vulture* to his rendezvous with Mr. Gustavus in the bushes on the Clove, the cowboys of whom Major Boyd spoke were breaking into Farmer Pelham's stable at Poundridge. The farmer ran out in his nightshirt to save his horses, and was instantly shot down in his own yard, while his wife shrieked for help from the bedroom window. This was a sad story, but it would not have frightened Anderson into taking the other road.

Still less would it have occurred to Mr. Anderson, that poor Pelham's murder was a matter in which he himself had a personal concern. And yet, if there is anything in astrology, and their nativities had been cast, it would have been seen that Farmer Pelham's catastrophe bore very directly indeed on a certain malefic aspect of the Sun, Mercury, the Moon, and Mars, to be found in the horoscope of Mr. John Anderson.

Turn back, John Anderson, take the other road! Farmer Pelham was murdered the night before last!

John Anderson did not fancy he heard a voice say these words in his ear; but when he had ridden near on four leagues, he had a fright. Riding round a sharp turn of the road, came a horseman whom he immediately recognised as a certain rebel Colonel Samuel Webb. For a moment, Mr. John Anderson's hair stands on end under his round beaver hat, and his heart is in his mouth. Colonel Webb is staring full at him—wondering probably where he has seen that face before. But Mr. Anderson is shabby and dusty, his face is not over clean, and paler than is natural to him, and he has a beard of three days' growth,

instead of his usually smooth chin. The rebel Colonel rides past, and is soon out of sight.

"That was the nearest thing of all," thinks Anderson. "I thought I was lost then!"

Turn back, John Anderson, turn back—there is yet time!

This was the Neutral Ground—a debateable land wherein Whig and Tory farmers dwelt together in more or less open enmity, and cowboys and skinners ravaged on either side. When the news spread of Farmer Pelham's murder, seven young men immediately banded themselves together at North Salem, resolved to avenge him, and, if possible, recover the horses for his widow. One of these young men, John Paulding by name, was the son of a respectable farmer, whose own farm had been laid waste by cowboys. John and his brothers, seeing their occupation thus gone, had joined the Provincial army; and John had been captured by young Ensign Tidd, of Delancey's corps, and carried off to the Sugar House. But he had escaped almost directly, and was now hanging about North Salem, courting the Ensign's sister, who was his sweetheart. Most of the seven were farmers' sons.

They had got a permit from Colonel Sheldon at South Salem, and had marched yesterday nearly five-and-twenty miles, slept under a haystack near the church at Pleasantville, and set off again early in the morning on the road to Tarrytown. They got some breakfast at the house of a relation of one of them, and then took up their watch. Four of them went up Butter-milk Hill, whence they could watch the cross-roads, in case the cowboys with their booty should take the other road through the Sawmill Valley; while the other three, one of whom was John Paulding himself, went a few hundred yards beyond, and waited by the side of the main road, about half-a-mile above Tarrytown.

Mr. John Anderson was still hugging himself on his hair-breadth escape from recognition by Colonel Webb, and looking at the sketch of the route given him by Mr. Gustavus, from which route he had departed for such excellent reasons. He was so deep in thought that he did not notice three young men—looking like Continental Militia, playing cards under a tree—and they were so deep in their game, that they did not hear Mr. Anderson's horse-hoofs on the wide bit of grass-land which bordered the road, until he was nearly upon them.

"Stop! who goes there?" cries the tallest of the young

men—a great fellow, over six feet high—snatching up his rifle, and presenting it at Mr. John Anderson.

"I hope, gentlemen, you belong to our party," says Mr. Anderson, taking these for the cowboys.

"What party's that?" asks John Paulding, still pointing his rifle at Mr. Anderson—to which that gentleman replies by asking, "Why, where do you come from?"

"We come from below," says Paulding.

At this Mr. Anderson's brow clears, and he exclaims joyfully—"If you're from below, so am I! I am a British officer, out on particular business, and I hope you won't detain me a moment."

To convince them that he really is a British officer, Mr. Anderson hereupon pulls out his watch and shows it them. Paulding looks at it—at Mr. Anderson—and then at his two companions.

"You must dismount," he says. The other two have got hold of the bridle, and now lead the horse on to the grass.

"By G——! a man must make use of any shift to get along," says Mr. Anderson, dismounting with an uneasy laugh. "I'm happy, gentlemen, to find I am mistaken," he continues, fumbling in his pocket as soon as he is on his feet. "I see you belong to the party from above. You were best not detain me, or you'll bring yourselves into trouble. To convince you of it, there's a pass from General Arnold; I'm in his service. You'll see by that pass, that if you stop me you'll detain the General's business. I'm bound to Dobbs' Ferry to see a person there now, on the General's business, and I do hope, gentlemen, you won't do what you'll be very sorry for afterwards."

As Mr. Anderson says all this in a slightly flurried manner, he takes out a small piece of paper, and hands it to Paulding.

"Look here, Ike," says Paulding, in a low voice to one of the others.

"It aint no good to me, I can't read," says Ike—getting a tighter grip of the bridle as he speaks. Nor can his companion read, so Paulding reads aloud—

"Head Quarters, Robinson House,

"Sept. 22, 1780.

"Permit Mr. J. Anderson to pass the Guards to the White Plains or below, if He chuses. He being on Public Business by my Direction.

"B. ARNOLD, M.-Genl."

"That sounds all right," says Ike, and Mr. Anderson, quick

as thought, remounts his horse, while Paulding gives him back his pass. Mr. Anderson is just in the very act of reining his horse into the road again, when Paulding suddenly says in a low voice to the others,—“D——n him, I don’t like his looks ! Don’t let him go, Ike ! Stop, sir ! we aint done with you yet. There’s a many bad people about on these roads, and how do we know as you aint one of ’em ? You’ve a’ready give two different accounts of yourself. Are you got any letters or papers about you ?”

“No, none,” says Mr. Anderson, changing colour a little.

“What was that paper as you had in your hand as you was a-coming along ?”

“Only a sketch of my route,” says Mr. Anderson, eagerly producing it. “I beg, gentlemen, you’ll not detain me longer !”

“We can’t let you go till we’ve searched you ; you said, you know, you was a British officer,” returns Paulding ; and in spite of Mr. Anderson’s remonstrances, they lead his horse into a field, partly overgrown with underwood. Here (while the unconscious beast strays off to graze), Mr. John Anderson is compelled to strip, under a great white-wood tree, and is discovered to have upon him a couple of watches—one gold and one silver, seven guineas, and a little Continental money.

Mr. Anderson submits to this indignity with as good a grace as he can—assuring his captors the while that they are incurring a great responsibility in detaining him—until he is desired to pull off his boots. Then he changes colour—but an unarmed man must needs obey three loaded rifles, so he pulls them off. “There’s nothing in ’em,” says one of the men, taking them up and shaking them.

“Feel of his stockings,” says Paulding.

At this, Mr. Anderson becomes as white as his own shirt, and mutters what sounds like, “All’s gone !”

“There’s papers inside his stockings,” says Paulding’s lieutenant, on his knees at Mr. Anderson’s feet.

“Give ’em over to me,” says Paulding, handing his rifle to the third man, and, looking at the backs of the papers, he exclaims,—“This is a spy !”

Then they examine Mr. Anderson more strictly still—even untying his queue. But there is nothing else, and they make him dress himself again—he protesting all the while that they know not what they are doing, and offering them any sum they like to name for delivering him at King’s Bridge.

"Would you give us your horse and saddle, them two watches, and a hundred guineas, to let you go?" asks one of them, winking at Paulding.

"Yes—or any sum you like to name—or any quantity of dry goods," says Mr. Anderson eagerly.

"If we was to go to King's Bridge, they'd nab us, and send us to the Sugar House," replies the other. At which Mr. Anderson offers to let two of them stay with him, while the third goes with a letter he will write. If they will trust his honour, no harm shall befall them. Five hundred, or even a thousand guineas——

The three consult together, keeping, however, their guns handy.

"If you write," says the man who has seemed most inclined to drive a bargain, "they'll send out a party, and nab us all."

"I will pledge you my honour, gentlemen!" cries Mr. Anderson very earnestly. "Sure a thousand guineas——"

"Not if you was to offer us ten thousand!" says Paulding. "I'll lay my life as you're a spy, and we mean to take you to our lines."

Having caught the horse (and ripped up the saddle to see if any more money or papers are concealed there), they order Mr. Anderson to mount, and he is brought out into the road again. Here he sees four other young men, to whom Paulding says something so low that Anderson does not catch it. Whatever it is, it causes all four to start, and stare at him with all their might.

It is vain to strive with fate; Mr. John Anderson went to North Castle after all—where his captors handed him, his papers, his watches, and his money, over to Colonel Jamieson, and themselves went back to look for the murderers of Farmer Pelham.

CHAPTER XCI.

AN ADVANTAGE TAKEN IN WAR.

COLONEL JAMIESON was somewhat perplexed as to what to do with his prisoner, who stoutly maintained his innocence, and most earnestly begged the Colonel to send word of his capture

to General Arnold, who would, he protested, instantly clear him. The papers found upon him were very compromising, being full descriptions of the force and stores at West Point, and also of the works themselves. They were evidently so very important, that Colonel Jamieson finally resolved to despatch them to the Commander-in-Chief, and to send Mr. Anderson himself back at once under an escort to General Arnold. Meanwhile Lieutenant King was ordered to watch the prisoner.

Lieutenant King was a good-natured young fellow. When, after breakfast, the barber waited on him, he advised Anderson to let himself be made comfortable too. It did not escape King, that when the barber untied the ribbon of Mr. Anderson's queue, it was full of hair powder. Mr. Anderson, then, wore powder, and was therefore a gentleman. Lieutenant King began to watch him more carefully.

When the barber had shaved and dressed Mr. Anderson, he asked Mr. King if he could go to bed, while his shirt and small-clothes were being washed, but King good-naturedly lent him some of his own.

But still that Saturday was a very weary day for Mr. Anderson, and he was overjoyed when, late in the evening, another young officer made his appearance, and informed him that he was to come with him to West Point at once.

Mr. Anderson's arms were bound behind him, a soldier held the strap, and the officer (whose name was Solomon Allen), ordered the escort, in the prisoner's hearing, to shoot him if he tried to escape. The escort was composed of nine troopers of Colonel Sheldon's Light horse, but only the officer was mounted. He rode just behind Mr. Anderson, and was good enough to inform him he should be well treated, and, when he was tired, should take a turn on the horse.

Mr. Anderson—who, next to getting to New York, would have preferred being returned to Mr. Gustavus—stepped out briskly, reflecting on what a fortunate idea that was of Colonel Jamieson's, to save time by sending the prisoner himself at once to West Point, instead of merely notifying his capture. They had gone somewhere about seven miles, when they heard horse-hoofs behind them, and an express came galloping up with a letter for the officer in command of the party.

"We are to leave the river-road—as the enemy may have parties about—and take you back again by the other way," says King, when he has read this letter by the light of a lantern.

"There's no fear of a rescue, sir," says poor Mr. Anderson, who sees his last chance disappearing.

The officer is young, and discipline is lax. The guard grumble—they want to get back to West Point, North Castle being very dull.

But after a moment's hesitation, Allen says decisively,—
"We must obey orders!"

And so by a circuitous route—Colonel Jamieson evidently having fears of a rescue—they get back to North Castle very early next morning; and Allen, with a guard, starts off immediately for West Point, with the letter which is to inform General Arnold that Mr. John Anderson has been taken near Tarrytown, with important papers concealed on his person.

Mr. Anderson had to thank Major Tallmadge for thus bringing him back into the jaws of danger. Tallmadge was in command of Sheldon's advanced guard, and had been out all Saturday with a detachment, reconnoitring below White Plains. He returned to quarters late in the evening, and found everybody talking about the spy who had been taken that morning. Colonel Jamieson showed him the papers, which were just going to His Excellency, and which were in General Arnold's own handwriting; and Tallmadge instantly took the alarm, and declared there was more here than met the eye. He all but forced his superior officer to send for the prisoner back, and tried hard to prevent the letter going to General Arnold. Tallmadge was a student of Yale, while Dr. Benedict Arnold was still selling drugs in Water Street, and he had a prejudice against him. He threw his Colonel into a state of great agitation, by daring to suggest doubts of the General, but he went on reasoning, and imploring, and insisting, till Jamieson unwillingly yielded so far as to send for Mr. Anderson back again.

Major Tallmadge did not do things by halves. He proposed a plan to Colonel Jamieson, by which he thought he could discover the plot (if there was one); but the Colonel thought it too perilous.

His plan being rejected (we do not know it—he kept the secret—perhaps for future use), Tallmadge's next care was the safe-custody of the prisoner. North Castle was too near the enemy's lines; so betimes on Sunday morning he took Anderson to South Salem—Colonel Sheldon's headquarters—and kept watch upon him himself.

They spent the morning in Mr. Bronson's bedroom—a small room on the ground-floor. A sentinel stood at the door, and another at the window; Anderson could see him pacing up and down, just outside, his rifle-barrel gleaming in the sunshine of the fine September Sunday morning. Mr. Anderson was absent and distraught—he started a dozen subjects and dropped them all, and could not conceal his intense anxiety. Towards the middle of the morning, he observed that there was a large yard in front of the house (the headquarters of Sheldon's Light Dragoons were at Squire Gilbert's), and asked to be permitted to stretch his legs there. Major Tallmadge disposed the guard so as to prevent any attempt at escape, and Mr. Anderson walked up and down for an hour or so, with Tallmadge and Lieutenant King—who had come over from North Castle.

As they pace the yard, Mr. Anderson tells his companions that he had come with a flag up the Hudson, to see a person on business—that the wind blew so hard, the Dutchmen were afraid to return with the skiff, so, not caring to be detained, he had resolved to return by land.

As Mr. Anderson walks, talking thus, Major Tallmadge watches him narrowly—falling back a little, on pretence of speaking to a sentinel, to see him better.

"Come here, King," he says, "Mr. Anderson will excuse you an instant." Then he whispers in King's ear, "Notice his walk."

King does so very attentively, and then gives Tallmadge a look of intelligence.

"He's no merchant," whispers Tallmadge, just as Mr. Anderson turns. "He has been bred to arms!"

"I've had my own suspicions too," says King, watching the elastic but measured stride of Mr. Anderson.

Major Tallmadge leaves them for a while, and King returns to the prisoner's side, very thoughtful. Suddenly, Anderson exclaims,—“I can bear it no longer! I must make a confidant of some one, and you, sir, have seemed to befriend a person in distress. Sir, I am not what I appear to be! I am an officer of the British army, betrayed by a combination of unfortunate circumstances into the vile condition of an enemy within your posts—’twas without my knowledge and against my express stipulation that I came there! I came in my regimentals—would to God I'd never quitted them! But what could I do?

I go, as I believe and am assured, to neutral ground—I find myself unawares within your lines—I'm told I can't return the way I came—nor any way, unless I will consent to change my clothes! Good God! Mr. King, consider my dilemma, and ask yourself what I could do in it?"

"I suppose, sir," says King very gravely, when Mr. Anderson thus passionately appeals to him,—“I suppose, sir, I must not ask you your errand?"

"'Twas—I frankly confess it—one of those advantages taken habitually in war," returns Mr. Anderson. "A person was to give me information—when does a week pass that you do not yourselves receive information in a private manner?"

Major Tallmadge becomes more thoughtful and uneasy than ever, when he is told this. He is a young man, of about the same age as Mr. Anderson, and, in spite of the dreadful circumstances under which they are thrown together, they have taken a great fancy to each other. Even in this terrible predicament, there is something so spontaneous and single-hearted about Mr. Anderson—and so totally unlike the odious character of a spy—that Tallmadge cannot help being very sorry for him, and shows it.

After dinner, Mr. Anderson becomes still more restless and uneasy; and at length requests Major Tallmadge to procure him pen, ink, and paper, as he wishes to write to General Washington.

Mr. Anderson was a long while writing his letter, and was dreadfully agitated in the course of it. When he had finished it, he read it over carefully, sighing heavily once or twice as he did so.

"You may as well read it," he says, throwing it across the table to Tallmadge, and burying his face in his hands.

Tallmadge takes up the letter. It begins:—

"SIR—What I have said as yet concerning myself, was in the justifiable attempt to be extricated; I am too little accustomed to duplicity to have succeeded."

"A most unspy-like beginning," thinks Tallmadge, glancing pityingly at Mr. Anderson's bowed head.

He reads a little farther, and utters a smothered exclamation—at which Mr. Anderson's head sinks lower still, till it rests upon the table.

The passage which Major Tallmadge has just read runs thus :—

“The person in your possession is Major John André, Adjutant-General to the British army.”

Colonel Jamieson's messenger, having missed His Excellency on the lower road, happened to pass through Salem just as this letter was ready, and took it with him, along with the papers and plans.

CHAPTER XCII.

HIS EXCELLENCY IS EXPECTED TO BREAKFAST.

AFTER the General had ridden off to Haverstraw, on Thursday afternoon, Mrs. Arnold invited Major Branhholm into her own sitting-room, where he found Major Franks patiently rocking the cradle, with a deal of humorous satisfaction expressed on his honest countenance.

Peggy, as a young mother, was more charming than ever. She could not talk enough of Philadelphia, from which she had hardly ever been away before. She doubted, she said, that she would find West Point very dull after Philadelphia—though, to be sure, she would have been miserable there without the General.

In the midst of such talk as this, who should be announced but Mrs. Smith, come over from Fishkil, to call on Mrs. Arnold.

“I'm sure I'd no idea yesterday morning as I should sleep at Fishkil last night,” observed Mrs. Smith, when she had almost done admiring the baby. “But Joshua came in soon after you was gone, and said I must get ready that minute. Things was quiet enough just then, but no one could tell how long they might remain so, and I had best go while I could. But I said I'd only go on condition I might come down and see you all the same. You must feel dreadfully lost here with only gentlemen about—though the General's aides seem very agreeable young men, I will say that for them. But, Lord, my dear Mrs. Arnold, what use is a man to a baby?”

The young gentlemen whom Mrs. Smith thus annihilated with a word were not present to hear her opinion of them,

having politely left the ladies together. Mrs. Arnold, however, replied that she expected to do well enough. Major Branhholm was quite an old friend—she knew all his family—and Major Franks had taken amazingly to the baby—though 'twas no wonder, for was he not the sweetest cherub ever seen?

"He is indeed a sweet little fellow," says Mrs. Smith, softly touching the dimple in baby's chin. "How proud the General must be of him!"

"Oh, he is indeed!" cries Peggy. "My dear Mrs. Smith, I'm the happiest woman in the world—that is, I should be, if only the General wouldn't take his troubles so much to heart. But you know how infamously he has been served."

General Arnold returned next morning, and, after spending some time with his wife and child, came down to the large room, where he found his secretary and his aides busy correcting the rough drafts of some reports. He talked to them freely about his hopes. The information, he said, was even more important than Smith had led him to expect. Great caution would, however, be needed, and the least indiscretion would spoil everything.

After the General had left them, and gone back to Mrs. Arnold's room, Noel stood in one of the windows, talking to Varrick. The room was long and low, with heavy beams, and an old-fashioned open fireplace without a mantel. The walls were panelled, and the room had only two windows. Noel was saying to Varrick that he was a little uneasy about the great chain, which had been stretched across the Hudson from Constitution Island. One of the links had lately been removed to be repaired, and was not yet replaced.

"There's something in the air," says Noel. "I feel it stirring. We are on the eve of great events. I do not believe we shall be disappointed this time; depend on it, Varrick, His Excellency will bring back good news from Hartford."

Nothing particular happened that day, or the next. On the third day, which was Sunday, Mr. Joshua Smith came, looking considerably the worse for his patriotic exertions. He was some time with the General, who was rather more cheerful after the interview, though still in very uneven spirits. Mr. Smith doubtless informed him how he had left Mr. John Anderson safe on the Neutral Ground, riding joyfully away to North Castle and the White Plains—little dreaming that Mr. Anderson had disobeyed the General's advice, and was at that very moment

stretching his legs in the yard of Squire Gilbert's house at Old Salem, with Major Tallmadge suspiciously watching him!

No one has ever yet explained why the last few hours before a catastrophe always stand out so clear in the memory. Noel Branhholm was, it is true, expecting some great event, but he did not expect it immediately. Wednesday was the day when His Excellency would probably return, and even after that, several days more must elapse before things could be ready. And yet it ever after seemed to Noel (as it has to most of us before our own catastrophes) as though that Sunday stood out from all his life. There had been absolutely nothing to mark it—for Mr. Smith's visits were so frequent that they had ceased to be observed. The day was very fine—the sun never after seemed to Noel to shine quite so bright as on that day. There was an autumn-glory on the hills too, and the sky took on an ineffable softness. So, at least, it ever appeared to Noel, when he looked back on it. Just as a lowering cloud lends an unearthly glory to the sunset, so did the impending calamity, under whose shadow he ever after saw that day, seem to show the landscape steeped in more vivid and gorgeous radiance than he could ever find there again.

Even the next morning did not seem so fair in memory's eyes, though it was a bright day enough; and before the sun had dried the heavy autumn-dews, His Excellency's servants arrived with his baggage and announced that he would be at West Point by breakfast-time.

His Excellency would have been there the day before, and had actually left Fishkil, when he met the Chevalier de la Luzerne—the new French Minister—on his way to visit Rochambeau, and was prevailed upon to turn back and pass the night at Fishkil with the Chevalier—who did not know that he was by this delay contriving for His Excellency to reach West Point in the very nick of time!

Long before his baggage had arrived, His Excellency was in the saddle, with General Knox, the Marquess, and their suites—all but Colonel Fleming, who stayed behind at the last moment to make a translation of a letter for the Chevalier. He had not yet overtaken them, when they had nearly reached General Arnold's headquarters.

"General, you are going in a wrong direction," says the Marquess—to whom His Excellency allows the familiarity of a

son. "You know that Mrs. Arnold waits breakfast for us—that road takes us out of our way."

"Ah, I know you young men are all in love with Mrs. Arnold," returns His Excellency good-humouredly. "But I must examine the redoubt this side the river, now we're here."

His Excellency, however, desires Dr. M'Henry and Major Shaw to ride on to the house, and beg Mrs. Arnold not to wait for him—he will be there in an hour.

On His Excellency's aides delivering this message, every one sat down to breakfast—which was laid in that long, low room with the two windows. General Arnold seemed rather absent, while Dr. M'Henry was telling him about the Chevalier. His aides, at the farther end of the table, observed to each other in a low voice that he was always put out, when the French were being talked of.

It was about ten o'clock, and breakfast was half over, when a message was brought in that Lieutenant Allen was come with a letter from Colonel Jamieson.

"Show him in," says the General; and Allen comes in and presents the letter—explaining that he would have been here before, but his guard being on foot, he could not ride fast.

"Sit down, sir," says Arnold, slightly introducing the Lieutenant to Mrs. Arnold and the company. Then he opens the letter, and at the first glance rises hastily from his chair, saying that he is wanted over at West Point immediately.

"Tell General Washington I'm called over the river and will soon return," he says to M'Henry as he goes out, and they hear him ordering his horse to be saddled instantly.

As Mrs. Arnold was present, of course no remark could be made, and a somewhat awkward silence fell on the party—Peggy herself being rather uneasy as to what it could be which took her husband away, when His Excellency was expected every moment.

In a minute or two a message came that the General desired to see Mrs. Arnold for a moment—upstairs.

As soon as Peggy is gone, tongues begin to wag. There is nothing, of course, in the General's going over to West Point—especially as he has not been there for some days—but his going without waiting to see His Excellency is certainly rather odd. Lieutenant Allen thinks there can be no harm in saying that all he knows is, that a person suspected to be a spy was taken on Saturday near Tarrytown; 'tis just possible there may

be something wrong at West Point, and the General may have thought it better not to lose even an hour.

Just as Allen was offering this vague explanation of the bomb-shell he seemed to have brought with him, they heard a shriek — then a bell ringing violently — then the General's voice exclaiming in an agitated tone that Mrs. Arnold was taken ill—some one must attend to her directly ; and a minute or two after, they heard him gallop away. Noel ran out, and presently saw him dashing down a very steep path—the nearest way to the water.

As Peggy was occasionally subject to hysterical attacks, the General's own family was not so much alarmed as were the strangers. Noel hastened off for Dr. Eustis from the hospital, while Major Franks ran upstairs, whence Mrs. Arnold's maid was screaming for help to hold her mistress. When Noel returned with the doctor, they found poor Peggy at the head of the stairs, struggling like a mad creature with her maid and Franks (to whose assistance Colonel Varrick had come by this time), and raving that they were all leagued together to murder her child. It was a dreadful scene—Peggy with her lovely hair all dishevelled, her dress disordered, and so frantic that it was all they could do to prevent her hurting herself. No one had ever seen her like this before ; and even the General's having gone off in a hurry—having perhaps heard that something was wrong at West Point—could not account for so frightful a seizure.

At last Dr. Eustis managed to get her into her room, and to bed, where she lay worn out, uttering heavy sighs, and every now and then springing up to see that the child was safe in his cradle.

In the very midst of this confusion, His Excellency arrived, and was informed of what had occurred. After a hasty breakfast, he said he would not wait for General Arnold's return, but would go over at once to West Point, where he would, no doubt, find him. Perhaps, he added, Major Branzholm might as well come too, as he could tell them anything they might want to know.

Noel had by this time heard from Major Hamilton what had detained his brother—though Hamilton said he ought to have overtaken them long since. Perhaps it was as much this disappointment as the shock of General Arnold's precipitate departure, which made Noel feel so dull and low-spirited. But

various odd circumstances conspired to perplex him disagreeably. As they were crossing, His Excellency observed to the Marquess that they would presently hear a salute fired. But they had reached the landing, and begun to mount the winding path which led up to the forts, before they either heard or saw any sign of their being expected; and the only sign then was Colonel Lamb—General Arnold's old friend and comrade of Quebec and Ridgefield, and who was the officer in command here—coming strolling down the path as unconcerned as possible.

On seeing His Excellency and the other Generals, the Colonel is all in confusion, and begins a hundred apologies for not firing a salute; but, indeed, he had believed they was not to have the honour of seeing His Excellency before Wednesday, or Tuesday at the earliest.

"Then, sir, is not General Arnold here?" asks His Excellency, looking very much surprised.

"No, sir; nor I haven't heard from him these two days," returns Lamb, looking puzzled too.

His Excellency thinks it very odd. They must have misunderstood General Arnold somehow, but they had better inspect the works, if they are to get back in time for dinner. No doubt the General will soon be heard of.

But the General did not appear, and His Excellency, having inspected the works, was rowed back, and was ascending on the other side, when they saw Major Hamilton (who had remained behind) hurrying down to meet them, with so perturbed a countenance that every one instantly knew something serious had happened.

"There's a messenger come from Colonel Jamieson, sir—he went by the lower road, and so missed you," says Hamilton, breathlessly; and then, taking His Excellency a little aside, adds something the others do not hear, but at which His Excellency's face becomes, if less disordered, as grave as Hamilton's own.

As soon as they came to the house, His Excellency was closeted with Major Hamilton for some little time, while the Marquess and General Knox—standing together in one of the windows of the large room (where dinner was already laid)—looked at each other in anxious silence; and their suites stood about in little groups, now and then exchanging a few words, but mostly listening for they knew not what.

Varrick, Franks, and Noel Branhholm were together, nearest the door.

"Whatever it is," said Noel—unable to endure the suspense longer without speaking—"depend upon it, 'tis the same thing that has took General Arnold away—both messages came from Colonel Jamieson."

"I'm every instant expecting a surprise," says Varrick, who is very pale. "What's the sloop been doing so high up the river all this while, I should like to know? Even now she's only dropped down to Verplanck's. And yet, if there was any idea of such a thing, surely General Arnold would have let 'em know it over at West Point—you say Colonel Lamb had heard nothing, Branhholm?"

"He was perfectly dumbfounded at seeing His Excellency—did not expect him till Wednesday," returns Noel.

At this moment, a door is heard to open—a hasty step crosses the corridor, and Major Hamilton looks in.

"His Excellency begs the Marquess La Fayette and General Knox will do him the favour of stepping this way," he says. Then, but just waiting to open the door for them, and usher them in to His Excellency, he is off down the corridor, and the next moment they hear him calling for his horse. A moment more, and he is riding at a hand-gallop in the direction of North Castle.

CHAPTER XCIII.

TREASON.

STILL nothing was heard of General Arnold, and no one knew what to think or what to say, though most people's fears took the shape of expecting a surprise by the enemy.

After some time, dinner was served, and His Excellency and the Generals came in, His Excellency saying, as he looked round the room,—

"Come, gentlemen, since Mrs. Arnold is unwell, and the General is absent, let us sit down without ceremony."

Dinner was worse than breakfast had been. His Excellency talked a little, but it was evident that he only did so to prevent an awkward silence. It was a relief when the meal was over, and the Generals returned to the other room. Several

other officers had been sent off in different directions, since Major Hamilton's departure; but no one had arrived—not even Jasper.

Some time in the afternoon, Noel went up to ask how Mrs. Arnold was. She had been in hysterics great part of the time, replied her maid, and the least thing set her off again as bad as ever. For her part, she couldn't help but be afraid as something had happened to the General.

Noel was still outside on the landing, wondering what it could all mean, and longing for Jasper, when Major Franks came slowly upstairs, with the same expression of consternation on his face which Noel had already seen on Hamilton's.

"Do you know anything?" cries Noel, springing towards him. "For God's sake, what is it?"

"Hush! she will hear us," whispers Franks. "Come away; I can't tell you here."

"In my room, then," said Noel, almost forcibly pushing Franks in at an open door a little way farther along the corridor. "What is it? Have we had another defeat in the South?"

"Worse than that!" exclaims Franks, bursting into tears. "Dishonour—treason! General Arnold has betrayed us, and is gone off to the enemy!"

Noel would have fallen, had not Franks caught him in his arms. Franks got him into a chair, where he sat staring at him without speaking. Fearing he was going to faint, Franks dragged the chair close to the open window.

"Is it certain?" asked Noel presently, in a voice more like a ghost's than a living man's—there seemed no emotion in it, but it made Franks shiver.

"Too certain—only too certain," falters Franks. "The papers are in his own hand—all the plans of West Point, the number of men, the stores, and His Excellency's plan for the next campaign. The officer that had 'em was taken on Saturday morning at Tarrytown——"

"Stop, stop!" said Noel, in the same hollow voice. Then he looked helplessly round the room, put his hand feebly to his head, and begged Franks to leave him. Franks did so very unwillingly, and went downstairs, and out of the house.

There was so much coming and going, that no one had noticed horse-hoofs clattering up to the door, and Colonel Fleming, who was the new arrival, seeing no one to take his horse, had

led him round to the stable himself. He was just returning, when he came upon Franks as he was turning the corner.

"The Chevalier detained me a most unconscionable time," said Jasper, greeting the Major heartily. He was heated with his ride, and looked altogether in such good spirits that it gave Franks a new pang to think of what he must presently be told.

"My horse too must needs cast a shoe, and I had to walk him some way before I could find a blacksmith," continued Jasper; and then he noticed Franks's face, and asked rather anxiously,—*"Is there anything the matter? you look uneasy——"*

"Matter! Gracious Heavens! How shall I tell you?" cries Franks. *"I'm ashamed to speak the words—but you must hear it soon. General Arnold, sir, has turned traitor, and is gone off to the enemy this morning!"*

As poor Franks said this in a most piteous voice, with the tears in his eyes, Colonel Fleming grew as pale as death, and leaned against the wall of the house—he seemed almost stunned.

"We only knew of it an hour ago—they've caught his go-between—Major André, the Adjutant-General of the British army—that will show you if the plot was a deep one!" continues Franks, wishing he had not told Colonel Fleming so suddenly, and yet not seeing how he could have prepared him.

"Think what 'tis to us of his family!" says Franks, and bursts out crying. "Such a man as we thought him! But 'tis beyond a doubt—there's all the papers to prove it—and we don't know the worst yet, nor how many there is in it——"

"How does my brother take the news?" asked Jasper, as soon as he could speak.

"He seems crushed by it—I've just told him—I doubt, too suddenly. But, good God! how could I prepare him to learn that our General's a villain? You should go to him, I think, sir—he's been counting so of your coming. You could perhaps comfort him a little; I left him in a very sad way," said poor Franks, who was himself in sore need of comfort. "We're all overwhelmed and confounded. But, pray, go to your brother, sir—he asked for you, but would not suffer me to stay with him. I was very loth to leave him, but he made me. Varrick, they say, had a fit when he heard it, and the doctor's with him now. Your brother's upstairs in his own room—the third door on the left—perhaps, sir, if you was to go to him——"

"I'll go instantly," said Jasper, wringing Franks's hand. "But, good God! what consolation can any of us offer each other for treason?"

Just as Jasper, still faint and giddy with the shock of so sudden and unexpected a blow, had reached the foot of the stairs, His Excellency himself opened a door, and desired him to step in. The Marquess and General Knox were there, and one or two staff-officers.

"I see by your face you've heard the news, Colonel Fleming," says His Excellency, going away to the window. "It has hit us all hard, and we don't know yet how far it may go. Sit down, and look at the papers found on Major André, and judge for yourself."

They lay strewn about the table—among them André's letter, which had come with the rest. As Jasper took them up one by one, and saw what they were, the hideous reality almost overcame him.

"'Tis too terrible!" he exclaimed, pushing the papers away as though they were adders and could sting. He covered his eyes with his hand—for a few moments he hardly knew where he was. He heard the Marquess tell somebody to fetch some water.

"You must excuse me, Marquess," says Jasper, looking up. "But I heard this very suddenly—and it comes home to me all the more, because my own brother has been with General Arnold from the first."

"We are all confounded by it!" cries the Marquess. "Who could have dreamed it? It petrifies us! We know not what to fear!"

"We have as yet not the least reason to suppose that any of General Arnold's staff suspected anything wrong," observes His Excellency, still at the window. "Why should they? I had no more suspicion of Arnold than I had of myself."

Colonel Fleming presently begged His Excellency to excuse him for a short time; he had heard, he said, that his brother was quite overcome by the news, and he would be glad to go to him.

Before Jasper left the Council-room, however, he had learned all that was yet known. General Arnold, it seemed, had galloped down to the dock, where his barge was always kept ready. He had entered the barge, and, with six oarsmen, had put off down the river. His Excellency himself must have

seen him go—he had observed a barge carrying a white flag—just disappearing round the farthest point visible, as he rode up to headquarters, after inspecting the redoubt in the morning. Measures were already being taken to strengthen the army at Tappan, and to provide against a surprise of West Point; and Major André was to be brought up to headquarters under a strong escort that night.

If anything could have added to the painfulness of the situation to Jasper, the fact that Major André was involved in it would have done so. Jasper had seen him but twice, but André was closely connected with that never-to-be-forgotten night when he had discovered that Althea loved him; and as he remembered the wild gaiety of André's manner at the *Mischianza*, and thought of his present position, the contrast lent a darker shade of tragedy to what was already so dark.

It was with a heavy heart indeed that Jasper went to find his brother. The door stood ajar; after listening a moment, he knocked, but there was no answer; and he went in. Noel was still sitting by the window; his head was sunk on his arms—he was so still that a thrill of terror shot through Jasper's heart.

"Noel," he said, laying his hand on his shoulder.

Noel lifted up his haggard face, and looked at Jasper.

"My heart is broke!" he cried, as he rose to his feet. "Oh, dear brother, my heart is broke!" Then he threw his arms round Jasper's neck, and sobbed on his breast.

CHAPTER XCIV.

"REMEMBER NATHAN HALE!"

As I live,

I do begin strangely to love this fellow.

THE DUKE OF MILAN.

MAJOR HAMILTON had been sent down to Verplanck's Point, in order, if possible, to intercept Arnold. But he was several hours too late. Colonel Livingston had seen the barge go by, and declared that he had had his misgivings about it, and had had a mind to stop it. Hamilton had but just arrived, when they saw a flag-boat coming up the river, which proved to

carry letters from Colonel Beverley Robinson and General Arnold (safe on board the *Vulture*) for General Washington. Hamilton did but wait to see the orders sent forward to General Greene (left in command at Tappan), and then hurried back with the letters to headquarters, meeting on his way an express riding post-haste to order Major André to be instantly brought up thither.

General Arnold's letter enclosed one to his wife. His Excellency carried it up himself. Peggy received him with a torrent of tears, and the moment he spoke of her husband fell into a sort of frenzy, and exclaimed, as she had done in the morning, that they meant to kill her child. His Excellency, after attempting to speak some compassionate words, was obliged to leave her to her attendants—who, however, could do very little with her.

After the first paroxysm of grief was over, Noel asked a few questions of his brother—the answers to which often overcame him afresh.

"'Twas his enemies drove him to it, Jasper," he said once. "But for them, he'd never have thought of it."

But Noel seemed to be still in a state of semi-stupefaction, and to be unable yet to realise the full extent of Arnold's crime. When he heard that André had been the agent, he turned very pale, but said nothing. Indeed, he said very little all the rest of the day, beyond a few incoherent words of lamentation. He was evidently suffering physically, as well as mentally, from the shock. He complained of his head, and would have it that the wound he had received at Saratoga had opened again. Even when Dr. Eustis—whom Jasper fetched to him—assured him it was not so, it was plain that he was unconvinced.

"Get him away from here, and don't let him know the prisoner is coming," says Eustis, when they are out of Noel's hearing. "'Tis not unlikely that knock on the head may have increased the excitability of a temperament quite excitable enough by nature. Don't leave him much alone. I don't think he seems disposed to do himself a mischief——"

"Good God!" says Jasper, horrified; "do you mean he's going out of his mind?"

"No—he's only completely unhinged—I wouldn't leave him long," says the doctor. "You see this has come like a thunder-clap on us all. There's Varrick's been clean off his head—he's quieter now, but I mean to sit up with him. 'Tis

bad enough for us all, but a hundred times worse for Arnold's own family—who may fancy, poor devils, they're themselves suspected."

Late at night, Mr. Smith was brought in under escort by an officer of the Marquess's suite, whom His Excellency had sent to apprehend him. He had been taken at Fishkil, and loudly complained of his treatment. Nothing was done that night. Mr. Smith was informed that he would be heard in the morning, and until then was left in ignorance of all that had happened. Long past midnight, His Excellency sat up writing to Congress; and before dawn, the express set off to carry the despatches to Philadelphia.

All this while, Major André had been waiting at Salem—beguiling the time by talking to Tallmadge, and making sketches of his unfortunate journey. There was one of these which represented the travellers, a little after they had left Haverstraw—a dark cloud seemed to be coming down upon them. André showed it to Tallmadge, who could not help exclaiming,—

"Oh, that you had never set out on this errand!"

Monday went by thus—the prisoner and his warders listening in vain for horse-hoofs to clatter up to Squire Gilbert's garden-palings. When the messenger did at last come, it was midnight, and the prisoner was gone to bed—perhaps to dream of gliding back to the *Vulture*, and climbing her side to laugh at Colonel Robinson for having been so timid about the venture. Whatever were his dreams, they were broken by the trampling of horses and the shouting of orders. Presently Tallmadge comes to the door.

"You must rise, if you please, Major André," he says, unlocking it from the outside. "Orders have come for you to be taken to Colonel Robinson's at West Point, and the escort is ready."

So they set out in the night and the rain. This is the fifth night which Major André has spent upon the road—reckoning that one when he and Mr. Gustavus talked in the bushes under the Clove, and the other when he lay for a few uneasy hours at Andreas Miller's. They have not ridden far, when, just by North Salem Meeting-House, they meet another express with orders for them to take the upper road. But there is no fear of a rescue—Sir Henry Clinton will not know till to-morrow morning that the plot has been discovered. Benedict Arnold is

at this very moment going down the Hudson in the *Vulture* to tell him.

* * * * *

It had long been daylight when they reached Robinson's house; the rain had nearly ceased, and the clouds were breaking. Dr. Eustis had advised a sleeping-draught, and Noel had been lying all night in a heavy sleep—even the noise of the arrival did not arouse him. But it awoke Jasper, who had shared his brother's room, and he sprang up to see what had happened. In the uncertainty as to how far the plot had gone, his first thought was of a surprise—and full of this fear the night before, he had merely lain down in his clothes. He had pulled the blind aside, before he remembered that it might only be Major André. In the same instant he saw him—dressed in his shabby travel-worn disguise. As his arms were bound behind him, some of his guards were almost lifting him off his horse. He was very pale, and was altogether a most pitiful figure.

Jasper dropped the blind, and threw himself on his bed, utterly overcome.

"Surely," he thought, "if I feel as much as this, Arnold will kill himself! A man might perhaps become a traitor—but how could he live after it?"

* * * * *

When Noel, still heavy with the powerful narcotic Dr. Eustis had administered to him, at last opened his eyes, it was to see Jasper and the doctor standing by his bedside. "You'll be all right if you keep yourself quiet," says Eustis, feeling his pulse. "Feel stupid, don't you? Never mind—give way to it. If you keep quite quiet, you may go over to West Point with Colonel Fleming this afternoon—the sooner you get away from here the better."

Poor Varrick was still, said the doctor, in a half-distracted state, but just enough master of himself to have sent an earnest entreaty to His Excellency that his own conduct might be investigated by court-martial—a request in which Franks had joined. Colonel Fleming had been ordered to go to West Point in the afternoon, to see that certain precautions were properly carried out, and had obtained permission to take his brother with him. Colonel Livingston had been sent for—in reality to give an account of himself. Mrs. Arnold had elected to go to her father in Philadelphia, and was to start under an escort as soon as possible. And Joshua Smith was at this

moment under examination. This was all the news of the morning, and Jasper kept most of it to himself—and especially took care that Noel should not hear that Major André had arrived.

His Excellency had desired to see Major Branzholm before he left—it was kindly intended, but was almost more than Noel could bear. He did not speak as they crossed to West Point, and Jasper, remembering what Eustis had said, did not try to rouse him.

Late at night, he asked Jasper if he knew what Arnold had written to His Excellency?

"He showed it me," replied Jasper. "It began with saying that all he'd done was done out of love to his country, but the chief part of it was taken up with assurances that Mrs. Arnold was innocent, and entreaties that His Excellency would protect her from the popular fury. And in a postscript, he said that the gentlemen of his family were entirely ignorant of his designs."

Noel was sitting at the supper-table, leaning his head on his hands. Colonel Lamb (at whose quarters they were) had just gone out of the room, and the brothers were alone.

Noel sighed heavily, while Jasper was speaking, then lifted his head as if he would speak—but only let it fall again, with a heavier sigh than before.

Neither of them spoke, until at last Jasper said gently,—

"Remember, Noel, if one has been false, how many have been true!"

"Is Gates true? or Lee? or Reed?" exclaimed Noel wildly. "Did we ever get to the bottom of the Cabal? How do you know who is true, if Arnold could be false? I know you always said he was too ambitious—but how hard 'tis to hit the line between ambition, and that desire for honour which is essential to the doing of great deeds! Would you have a man insensible to the respect of his fellows?"

"So far from that," said Jasper—glad that Noel seemed inclined to talk—"I cannot imagine a man's being able to live after he has justly forfeited it."

"How would you feel if Washington turned traitor?" continued Noel, still more excitedly. "What would you say then? Would you bid me remember how many there was left to be true?"

"Noel, you break my heart," says Jasper, coming round to

where Noel sat, and putting his arm round his neck. "What can I say? At such a pass as this, consolation itself gives a fresh wound. But Washington could never turn traitor, because he has never had one thought for self—nor even for glory. Yet his very enemies have been forced to respect him. There's not one of them that could ever fairly look him in the face, except Conway—and you know what Conway wrote him when he believed he was a dying man."

Noel said nothing; he seemed to have relapsed into the apathy out of which he had roused himself for a moment.

In the course of that evening, Major André and Mr. Smith had been brought over to West Point, closely guarded. A part of Colonel Fleming's duty had been to prepare for their safe custody. Noel was by this time aware that Major André was expected, but he merely remarked that he supposed he should see him at Tappan, where he was to be tried. Colonel Fleming had witnessed André's arrival, but was glad that his duty did not compel him to receive him, and André did not know that his old acquaintance of the Mischianza was so near.

Next day, Jasper saw Major Tallmadge, who was almost constantly with André, and learned from him all the particulars of the capture. As to the plot itself, Tallmadge said that André had told him very little—and nothing at all which he did not know was known already.

Tallmadge had become deeply interested in his unhappy prisoner during these few days—which, few as they were, seemed like a lifetime, and which, after the lapse of fifty years, Tallmadge could not recall without tears.

"When I think what his fate must be, I curse the traitor deeper than ever," he said to Jasper. "Could he but be saved! Hamilton is as sorry for him as I am—he says 'tis a pity but what we could exchange him for Arnold. 'Tis a wild idea, of course—and yet I think, if I was Arnold, I'd sooner come back and swing, than live a traitor, and let another man die a shameful death for my treason!"

Early next morning, Tallmadge took his two prisoners (who were not allowed to speak to each other) down to King's Ferry in a barge.

As they pass under the rocky heights of West Point and see the fortress crowning the cliff, Tallmadge cannot help

asking Major André whether he was to have taken an active part in the assault?

At this question, André's eyes light up, and his cheeks glow. He forgets that he is a prisoner going to be tried for his life—he forgets that he is talking to his enemy, as he points Tallmadge to a table of land on the west shore.

"I was to have landed there with a select corps," he says; "and then climbed yonder height behind Fort Putnam—it overlooks your parade at West Point. We must have succeeded, and the key of the country would have been in our hands!"

As he speaks, he seems as though he were entering the fort sword in hand; Tallmadge takes fire himself, and almost forgets what he is listening to. They have agreed on what they call "a cartel"—they may ask each other any question they choose, so long as they do not bring in a third person's name. Here André is firm—he will not even say anything about General Arnold.

"And what reward was you to have had?" asks Tallmadge, when he is again cool enough to reflect that the exploit which he has been hearing described is the storming of West Point by the British.

"The glory—and to serve my King—would have satisfied me," says André. "But Sir Henry hinted that if we succeeded (and we could not have failed), I was to be made a Brigadier."

"You could not have failed indeed," says Tallmadge, as he thinks on what a precipice they have been standing. "You know the ground a vast deal better than I do myself."

So the barge slides down between the solemn defiles of the Highlands. Though they should fall, they could not cover Arnold's shame.

They pass near Belmont, and dine at the Clove—not so very far from the place where Mr. Gustavus gave Mr. Anderson that midnight meeting in the bushes. Will the grass ever grow there any more?

Major André was so much distressed at the thought of having to ride into camp in Mr. Smith's clothes, that Tallmadge sent for his own dragoon's cloak, and, wrapped in this, he rode on to Tappan.

As they ride, the prisoner asks Tallmadge a question, which has been hovering on his lips all day, and intruding into all his protestations that he cannot be considered a spy.

"What do you suppose will be my fate?" he asks, trying hard to speak unconcernedly.

Tallmadge does not reply. André looks at him, but he has turned his face away.

"What will they do with me, do you think?" he says again—his voice a little changed, strive as he will to keep it indifferent.

"I had a dear friend—he was my classmate at Yale," says Tallmadge—his own voice much more constrained and unsteady than the prisoner's. "He went in disguise into your lines at New York, to get us information, just after our defeat on Long Island. His name was Nathan Hale——"

"He was hanged," says André in a strange, dull tone, as Tallmadge pauses. "But he was a spy——"

CHAPTER XCV.

THE RETURN OF THE *VULTURE*.

The attempt and not the deed confounds us.

EVERY one in New York had known for weeks past that some great enterprise was in the wind—some enterprise involved in even more than the usual mystery attending military operations. Sir George Rodney had ordered the transports to be ready to sail at a moment's notice; and an idea had got about that they were to go up the Hudson River. Major Digby viewed these preparations with great satisfaction, and hoped that a certain project had been abandoned, and that we were going to beat the enemy by force, instead of taking him by guile.

He met André one afternoon, and said as much to him. André was with Sir Henry Clinton, and they had both ridden over to the General's country-seat—a charming place overlooking the Hudson, which he had lent to Baron von Riedesel and his family. The Baron had lately been dangerously ill of a fever, but was now better. André was full of praises of the Baroness, who had nursed her whole household, and got them all safe through the fever. Digby said he was on the way thither himself.

"Well, good-bye, Fred: God bless you!" says André—pressing his friend's hand with more effusion than the occasion

apparently demands—and, setting spurs to his horse, he gallops after Sir Henry. The fact was, that Major André's mind being full at the moment of some very important business he was to transact next day, he had quite forgotten that he was to meet Fred that afternoon at dinner, at Colonel Williams's quarters in Kipp's House.

André was in excellent spirits at dinner. Once or twice, he fell into a reverie ; but for the most part he was the life of the company. When his song was called for, he gave them James Wolfe's famous words—

“Why, soldiers, why,
Should we be melancholy, boys,
Whose business 'tis to die?”

Feeling time hang very heavy on his hands, Major Digby called next evening at his friend's lodgings, and, learning he was out, sauntered for some time on the Mall, and looked at the ruins of Trinity Church—burned down in the great fire just after the battle of Long Island, now four years ago. This reminiscence led Major Digby to marvel anew at the astonishingly barren result of so many victories.

“However, I suppose, by what Jack says, we've got 'em at last,” he reflected, as he picked up a stone, and amused himself by aiming at a projection in the ruined wall—wondering as he did so whether Ally had received his letter, telling her she had better do as she chose—he would not advise her, but he thought it must be hard on Fleming—and if she was really determined to marry nobody else, he couldn't see the use of her waiting any longer.

This judicious epistle (which concluded with a somewhat rambling message for Mary) had been despatched about three weeks back, and Fred had been conscious of a generous glow, a little to the left of the second button of his waistcoat, ever since he had sent it off.

This was last Wednesday. It was now Monday evening, and Major André had been denied to him every time that he had called at his lodgings. There was but one interpretation of this absence—Jack had undertaken that business after all. Fred's heart misgave him. He did not sleep as well as usual that night—a most undoubted proof of the affection he bore to André. He awoke several times, with a sense of something disagreeable having happened or being about to happen, and

each time remembered the next instant that Jack André was gone—most likely to Philadelphia—to see a scoundrel who, if anything went wrong, would pretty certainly betray poor Jack to save himself. He rose earlier next morning than his duty for the day demanded, and strolled to the wharf, at which vessels coming down the Hudson were usually looked for.

Early as it was, there were a few other people waiting about. Fred saw one of Sir Henry's aides and spoke to him. He would have asked him boldly if he knew where Major André was gone, but for the fear lest the question might be considered a mark of indiscretion, should the aide happen to know anything about the offer which had been made to himself.

They were still upon the wharf, when a sloop came in sight, and Sir Henry's aide exclaimed that that was the *Vulture*. As she approached, Fred saw Colonel Beverley Robinson standing on the deck. As soon as the sloop came alongside, Robinson saw him, and, calling to him, desired him to oblige him by finding a coach as quick as possible. Fred ran off to the nearest inn, but had to wait while the horses were put-to. When he came back, a stout-built dark man in a Provincial uniform had disembarked, and was talking with Robinson and Sir Henry's aide. They all looked very serious, and, as they got into the coach, Robinson bade the coachman drive to Turtle Bay as fast as he could.

Fred had of course no idea who the American officer was, when he was helping put him and Colonel Robinson into the coach; but long before evening, he and all the other British officers in the city knew that it was the famous General Arnold, that he had come over to the King's side, and that Major André had fallen into the hands of the rebels. Sir Henry, it was said, had instantly written a most urgent letter to General Washington, insisting that Major André was protected by General Arnold's pass and requesting his immediate return.

But although Sir Henry took this high ground, every one knew that poor André was in the terrible position of having been caught in disguise within an enemy's lines. So little was yet known that very little could be done. Colonel Simcoe had, it was reported, immediately offered to march with the Queen's Rangers and rescue André. It was imagined that he would be taken to Philadelphia, and a watch was kept upon the roads. As for Major Digby, he thought that Sir Henry should instantly send Admiral Rodney up the river as far as he could

go, and himself march by way of Tappan, and boldly attack Washington in his camp.

"They'd hang him as soon as they heard we was approach-
ing," says Wickham, in answer to this proposition.

"They dursn't do it!" cries Fred in a transport of grief and fury. "Are we going to wait here, while Jack André's hanged? 'Tis monstrous! 'Tis incredible! A parcel of rebels hang up our Adjutant-General! This comes of our dangling about, doing nothing but burn a farmhouse every now and then—which only infuriates 'em, and don't do 'em any serious hurt—instead of going out and meeting 'em fairly in the field—where we've always beat 'em, except at Saratoga."

Here Fred's anger turned to a deep melancholy, and he added very despondingly,—“I'm afraid, Wickham, that Sir Henry's an unlucky General to get one out of a scrape. Perhaps it warn't altogether his fault with poor General Burgoyne; but I can't help fancying as he's a poor hand at a rescue. Why don't he run-a-muck for once? 'Twill be to his eternal disgrace if he lets Jack André be hanged!”

Fred's grief for his friend here overcoming his indignation at Sir Henry's supineness, he shed tears, and exclaimed that 'twas all his own fault, and he should never be able to forgive himself—on which Wickham, who was very fond of him, dropped a hint to the regimental surgeon that Major Digby had been talking rather wild, and that he thought he should be looked after a little, lest he might do himself a mischief.

Fred was perhaps scarcely just to Sir Henry—who had most strictly charged Major André not to go within the American lines, or to change his clothes, or carry any papers. The first injunction he had disobeyed unwittingly, and there then remained no alternative but to disobey the second. But the most fatal mistake of all was the carrying the papers.

The existence of the Devil has been disproved several times (once would have been enough); but the story of a great temptation and fall can hardly be told even yet without some reference to him—at least as a figure of speech.

Ancient magicians used (for a sufficient consideration) to conjure up in the depths of their mirrors pictures of the future destinies of those who consulted them. Such pictures—but lying ones—does the Devil show from that high mountain to which sooner or later he takes every one of us. He unfolded to

Benedict Arnold, smarting under his wrongs, a whole panorama, wherein the New Marlborough saw himself bringing the rebellion to a sudden conclusion, playing the part of reconciler and intercessor, redresser of grievances, and establisher of a Constitution which everybody should shortly own was infinitely better than the impracticable dream of Independence. His countrymen would of course be incensed at first—when did a land know her deliverers? but as time went on, he would be seen to have been their far-sighted benefactor—who had got them the substance at the price of a mere empty name. Instead of a many-headed Republic, held together by the loosest of ties, he would have been the means of founding the greatest and most prosperous Vice-royalty in the world—a New Great Britain. And in the Upper House of its Legislature the name of the New Marlborough should, in days to come, be honoured as his who had put an end to a hopeless contest, stopped the effusion of blood, and erected thirteen exhausted and starving colonies into one flourishing Dominion. “All’s well that ends well”—and future generations, seeing what unspeakable benefits they had derived from his treason, would bless the traitor.

This was the picture which the Devil had shown Benedict Arnold—so often, that he knew every detail of it, and saw himself passing from brief obloquy to lasting honour—until his dealings with Mr. John Anderson should be no more remembered than are the dealings of John Churchill with the agents of King James.

There was another picture, however, which the Devil never let him see. It would have shown Benedict Arnold, alone and unattended, landing from the *Vulture*, and going up to the Beekman House, to tell Sir Henry Clinton that the plot had failed, and that his favourite officer was a prisoner in the hands of the enemy. In this other picture he would have seen himself despised by those who had hoped to profit by his treason—detested as the cause of André’s destruction—and distrusted by his new allies, who, it seemed, could not believe themselves in the genuineness of the treachery they had fostered.

The Devil played this same trick on all the actors in this business. He showed John André the storming of West Point, and the epaulette of a Brigadier—and Sir Henry Clinton, the submission of the rebels, and a coronet; and he contrived for the rays of his magic-lantern to gleam so dazzlingly on these, that neither Sir Henry nor André observed the gibbet in the

background. Lastly, with a refinement of diabolical malice, by way of compensation, he made Sir Henry a present of General Arnold.

A nice weighing of distinctions had never been Fred Digby's *forte*—he openly expressed his detestation for the traitor, swore he would never go anywhere where he was to be, and, having on one occasion met him on Broadway, deliberately turned on his heel in so marked a manner, that all the passers-by perceived his meaning.

Fred expected to be sent for to headquarters for this, but General Arnold perhaps did not care to mention it; at any rate, Fred never heard anything about it.

Nothing could persuade Fred that General Arnold was not to blame for André's capture. Had he not contrived his own escape? he asked. And if he had been able to do that, as he represented, at a moment's notice, could he not have taken better care of poor Jack? It was quite in vain, that any cooler-headed person represented that Arnold had had as much at stake as André himself—a premature discovery was ruin to his plan; and although he had, by a hairbreadth escape, saved his neck, the failure of the plot made him simply a deserter from the rebel army, instead of the deliverer of it up to the King. But Fred was deaf to all these reasonings; he doggedly repeated that all he knew was that Arnold was safe in New York, with Sir Henry mighty civil to him—though no doubt in his heart he wished him at the devil—while Jack André was to be hanged as a spy—here Fred burst into tears, and swore that if Jack wasn't rescued, Sir Henry Clinton would be his murderer.

Long before this, Fred and a great number of the officers in New York had offered their services for a rescue-party. Simcoe was on the watch; and if General Washington had not used the most extraordinary precautions—always keeping his whole army between the prisoner and his friends—a rescue would undoubtedly have been attempted. Meanwhile, letters were passing constantly, and André's servants had been sent to him, with the clothes he had written for, that he might if possible appear at his trial dressed as a British officer.

But Colonel Simcoe's scouts watched the roads to Philadelphia in vain; the prisoner was kept close in Tappan, with a whole army to guard him.

CHAPTER XCVI.

IN THE DEAD OF NIGHT.

THE Board which was to try Major André was assembled in the old Dutch Church—a substantial structure standing on a knoll by the side of the post-road, and shadowed by a clump of trees. Hither—where the Dutch farmers and their wives and children used to come up every Sunday in sturdy procession, to sit in their high-crowned hats, and listen to a sound discourse on Sovereign Grace—John André was brought on Friday morning to be tried as a spy.

A great crowd had collected around the church—which was also surrounded by a strong guard. General Washington was returned to his old headquarters at De Windt's house near Sneedens Landing. He had not seen the prisoner, and, it was said, did not intend to do so. General Greene was the President of the Board; with him sat Lord Stirling, La Fayette and Steuben, Knox, and St. Clair, John Starke of Bennington, and that rebel namesake of Sir Henry Clinton's into whose hands Fred Digby had so nearly fallen after Saratoga.

There were no witnesses; not even Joshua Smith was called. What need was there? The letter which Major André wrote at Salem on Sunday afternoon was enough. His only defence was, that he had come unintentionally within the lines, and that he ought to be held to be protected by General Arnold's pass.

But no one outside knew this as yet. The doors were shut, and the only sounds were the buzz of the multitude without, and the occasional clank of arms.

* * * * *

Noel Branzholm had joined with General Arnold's aides in requesting an investigation, and he was now in camp, at his brother's quarters. He still complained of his head, and was very restless and excited. He had thrown off his gloomy silence, and was asking Jasper a hundred questions about André, when he had seen him in Philadelphia. What he had said? how he had looked? what Jasper had thought of him?

Jasper had already told all this at least a dozen times before—how Captain André had come hurrying in to his lodgings in his masquerade dress, and apologised for keeping him

waiting, and had insisted on carrying him back to see the festival—and added,—“ We spoke only of indifferent matters—any others would of course have been improper ; and next day at the Council he took no part. I thought him an accomplished man of the world—a little of a courtier, perhaps, but as unlike as possible to a conspirator. There was something about him very taking—so much so, that I have shrunk from seeing him in this situation, and shall avoid it, if I can.”

Greatly to Jasper's surprise, Noel said quickly, but as though he himself were noway concerned,—

“ If, as was believed in Philadelphia, he was a suitor to Althea, 'twould be as painful to him as to you.”

“ I wish I had told Tallmadge not to mention my being here,” returned Jasper. “ But you are surely not going out ? ”

“ I must see him ! I'd resolved not to, but I can't get him out of my head ! ” cried Noel, suddenly turning from the window, against which he had been pressing his burning brow, and speaking very excitedly. “ Don't persuade me, Jasper ! I knew he was there when we left Robinson's, and I knew when he came to West Point. Perhaps if I see him he'll cease to haunt me ! ”

Jasper was very uneasy at this and at Noel's whole manner, and spoke about it to his friend, Surgeon Thacher, who was now appointed to a regiment of his own State of Massachusetts.

“ My dear fellow, I know more about broken heads than I do about disturbed minds,” says Thacher. “ But we might let him blood—we did so to that poor fellow I told you of, that put General Gates in such a fix, and it seemed to do him good. 'Tis a pity your brother can't go away, but I suppose he couldn't ask for leave till this investigation has taken place—though, of course, every one knows 'tis a mere matter of form.”

They were still talking, and the surgeon had just said he would not give twopence for André's chances, when a soldier came running in to tell the Colonel that Major Braxholm had fallen down in a fit ; he had seen them bringing Major Andrew back from being tried, and had dropped down in the street. They were bringing him up to quarters.

“ You should have kept him in bed, Fleming ! ” exclaims Thacher, as though this were as easy to do as to say. “ Why did you let him go ? I shall cup him directly ! We shall have him in a brain-fever, before we know where we are ! ”

It is probable that the sight of André did but hasten an inevitable crisis, but its immediate effect was very alarming.

When Noel came out of his swoon, he was so far delirious that, though he knew his brother, he took Thacher for Dr. Eustis, and believed that they were still all at Robinson's house. He constantly besought Jasper to look out of the window, and see if Major André was coming; and the next moment, would call him back to his bedside, and implore him not to leave him. He was never quiet but when he was holding his brother's hand. Thacher had used pretty severe measures, and had strictly enjoined Jasper not to leave the patient for an instant, and to have some one else near, to help in case he should become violent. Telemachus therefore spent the night stretched across the door, in the passage outside—where he presently fell so fast asleep, that he did not even awake when the surgeon, coming early in the morning to see how his patient did, fell over his prostrate body.

But poor Noel was not violent. He lay grasping his brother's hand, occasionally moaning that his heart was broken, but he was not even particularly restless during the first part of the night. In the confusion of a troubled mind, he seemed to cling blindly to Jasper, as the only stable element left in a world which had suddenly given way beneath him.

"Hold me faster, brother!" he would say, as often as Jasper's grasp relaxed; "don't let me go!"

Once or twice, he seemed to be speaking to Althea, but in so low and incoherent a manner that Jasper only caught her name. More often it was his mother or Mary that he appealed to.

"Mother, mother!" he cried once, in a tone of piercing anguish, "all my glory is turned into shame!"

And once he said sharply,—“If he had loved you as much as I do, how could he have kept silence so long? and all for a complete stranger——”

He broke off suddenly, and was quiet for some time, while Jasper waited nervously for what he might say next.

Jasper had looked forward to this vigil with a painful apprehension of what Noel might say. On the night of their reconciliation at Hallibut's, Noel had thrown aside reserve, and spoken so freely that Jasper (who knew by experience how much bitterer are silent griefs than those which can be told) had allowed himself to think that his brother's grief was not incurable. But now, left alone in the dead of night, with Noel half delirious—in that strange state in which the soul, losing the self-consciousness which seldom entirely slumbers even in our

most passionate moments, casts off the last veil of reticence—what secret bitterness might he not discover !

But Jasper wronged him. There was no thought in Noel's heart towards him which he need shrink from reading. If, in the first shock of learning that his brother was his successful rival, some wild and angry feelings had for a time seemed to gain possession of him, it had been more in seeming than in reality ; and those feelings had been born far more of anguish than of hatred. Noel's love for his brother was as deep as his life—as it was as old ; and in his maddest moments he had never even imagined that Jasper had been untrue to him.

As Jasper sat by his brother, and felt the pressure of his hand gradually slacken, amidst thoughts of the miserable tragedy of Arnold's treason, many gentler memories intruded (as stars shine through rifts in a storm) of another night long ago, when he had played the nurse at Oglethorpe to Noel—who had fallen ill while their mother and Colonel Branzholm were gone on a visit to their uncle at Fairmead. Jasper smiled to himself, as he remembered that his treatment had solely consisted in deluging his patient with barley-water, and pulling the bed-clothes over him as often as he threw them off—which was on an average twice every five minutes. He had, however, sent word to his mother, who had started instantly—on horseback, for greater expedition—and had arrived after midnight, to find the juvenile physician at his wits' end, the patient having just awakened so much restored, that he had announced his firm resolution to get up and have some supper. A mist came over Jasper's eyes as this vision passed, and he came back to the present hour. The lamp was shaded, but there was light enough for him to see that Noel's face had grown less tranquil. He moaned and stirred uneasily, and began to talk—at first muttering unintelligibly, but soon speaking in a loud, excited key. His mind was evidently occupied with the march to Quebec.

"If that's the Chaudière, we're saved," he cried. "Arnold can't fail !"

Then he laughed—no doubt at some ludicrous incident of the march ; but his wild laugh gave Jasper more anguish than any ravings could have done. Presently he grew quieter again.

"Take it away," he said, speaking calmly enough, though he pushed Jasper's hand from him as he spoke. "I'll not have it, sergeant—'tis not bear—'tis hell-broth ! Faugh ! Give it some one else !"

From this his thoughts seemed to be wandering farther back still. He talked of things which happened in their childhood—strangely mixing up these childish memories, however, with the events of later years.

"Lay your hand on my head—'tis like a fire there," he moaned, as he tossed restlessly from side to side. "No—not that one—don't let go my hand—lay your other on my head. Why are you so unkind, when you know 'tis the only thing that eases me?"

"Why, Noel, have you forgot Germantown?" said Jasper, infinitely distressed, and not knowing how to appease him.

But sometimes a name will strike on the disordered sense, when connected words have ceased to convey any meaning. At the word "Germantown," Noel suddenly grew quiet, and opened his eyes.

"No, I've not forgot Germantown," he said, looking up at Jasper. "How could I, when I was there last night? 'Tis you forget, Jasper—you walked all the way back with me, though you would not speak, and I thought you was angry. The snow lies on their graves—I shall never forget it, for I saw a falling star—it fell right over Philadelphia. I didn't know what it meant then, but I know now! I know now!"

He burst into wild sobs and tears, exclaiming over and over again, that his heart was broken, and conjuring Jasper not to leave him—to let him feel him close to him.

"The moment you let me go, there's something comes and tells me I'm a traitor," he said, his mood changing to a sort of frenzy. "But I'm not—Jasper, tell me I'm no traitor!"

"God knows, my poor boy, you are none!" said Jasper, unable to restrain his tears. They fell on Noel's face, as he bent over him. Noel put up his hand and touched Jasper's cheek.

"Don't weep for me, dear brother," he said, more reasonably than he had spoken all the night. "Lie down beside me, so as I can feel you're there—I think I could sleep then. I had a bad dream, but 'tis gone."

Noel soon fell asleep, his brother's hand locked fast in his, and his head resting against his shoulder—as they had slept when they were children together at Oglethorpe; but Jasper lay long, listening to his breathing—afraid every moment lest he might awake, and begin it all over again. But he slept on, and Jasper, worn out with grief and watching, at last fell asleep

too, and did not awaken until it was broad day, and Thacher was looking in at the door, his finger on his lip, and nodding to express his satisfaction at seeing his patient still quietly sleeping.

CHAPTER XCVII.

A TRAITOR'S EFFIGY.

Let me sink

Where neither man nor memory may find me.

THE DEVIL'S LAW-CASE.

THE messenger who carried General Washington's despatch to Congress rode so hard, that he reached Philadelphia the same night. By Wednesday, every one had heard the news.

Mary Fleming came to see Althea in the morning of that day, looking so pale that Althea was terrified. She sank down trembling on the sofa, and could not even ask what was the matter?

"Oh, Althea, a terrible thing has happened," said Mary, dropping into a chair, and pulling her calash off her head, as though it suffocated her. "No—they're safe, thank God! Major André has been taken, and is to be tried as a spy; but that's not the worst. He had papers upon him, which showed that General Arnold had agreed to deliver up West Point. General Arnold has escaped to New York, but every one says that Major André will be hanged for a spy!"

"Major André! 'Tis impossible!" cried Althea, flushing crimson. "Where did you hear it? It can't be true!"

"'Tis all over the town," replied Mary quietly. "But Mr. Rittenhouse told me."

"It may be a false report—General Arnold has enemies here," said Althea. Then as the full meaning of the news began to unfold itself to her bewildered mind, she cried, almost wildly, that it could not be true—she would never believe it! Sir Henry Clinton would never have stooped so to dishonour himself in the eyes of the world, as to attempt so unsoldierly an expedient.

"It will break Noel's heart," said Mary, when Althea paused in the midst of these breathless exclamations. Mary spoke in a low quiet voice, with such despair in her eyes that Althea herself was quieted by it.

"If this is true, Mary, the dishonour to us will be greater than to you," she said sadly. "But I cannot believe it yet. And Major André——"

Althea broke off, as a certain conversation—their last—came to her memory. On that occasion, André had proposed that she should sound Colonel Fleming, with a view to detaching him from the Provincial cause.

"Is it true, Mary?" she said again. "We've had so many false malicious reports—surely this is one of them."

"'Tis true; and 'twill break Noel's heart," replied Mary, in the same resigned despairing tone. "His whole heart was set on General Arnold—he was so proud to have followed him. He will never get over his turning traitor. I should not wonder at anything I heard of him—anything, I mean," she added, correcting herself, "except his proving false too."

Althea knelt down by her, and put her arms tenderly round her, but did not speak.

Mrs. Maverick found them thus, half an hour afterwards, when she came in from calling at the Shippens'. She was in great agitation and had evidently been weeping.

"Have you heard this dreadful news?" she began. "The Shippens are completely broken-hearted, thinking what will become of Peggy, but, as I told them, she'd best go at once to her husband—that is, if General Washington will let her. But, oh, poor Major André! They all seem to think he'll be treated as a spy! I can't believe Mr. Washington will really dare to shoot him—but the very thought of such a thing's enough! So amiable and accomplished a young man——"

Mrs. Maverick here cried heartily, repeating every now and then that Mr. Washington would sure never dare do such a thing as shoot an Adjutant-General, and protesting she wondered what Sir Henry was thinking about when he let him go.

"If General Arnold wanted an interview, he ought to have gone to Sir Henry," she said, as her indignation began to get a temporary advantage over her grief. "A pretty thing, indeed, to send a British officer into a trap! And I must say, I think it looks very shabby on General Arnold's part, that he did not take precautions to make such a misfortune impossible! If he saw his error, and wished to repair it, he should have gone over openly, and not have allowed Major André to fall a sacrifice!"

Neither Mary nor Althea cared to comment on this view. Mary soon went away, and Althea was so extremely silent that

Mrs. Maverick asked her several times whether she had heard any bad news beyond this shocking affair?

A good many people called on Mrs. Maverick that day, eager to question a person who had intimately known the unfortunate Major. Althea sat and listened to all that was said, replying when her cousin appealed to her, but taking no voluntary part in the conversation, and looking so melancholy that some of the more sagacious went away convinced that Miss Digby had had a tenderness for Major André, though probably no one would ever know all the rights of it now.

During the next few days, nothing was talked of in Philadelphia but the treason of General Arnold, and the fate of Major André. If President Reed had any disposition to triumph at this proof that Arnold was even blacker than he had painted him, he was in too deep affliction (his wife being but just dead), to indulge such feelings now. But a public demonstration was not wanting. On the Saturday night, just after dark, a procession passed along High Street to Market Hill, escorting a dismal pageant. The effigy of the traitor was sitting in a cart, holding a mask in one hand, and in the other a letter signed—in letters big enough for every one to read—Beelzebub. Arnold was represented with two faces, and behind him stood the devil, pitchfork in hand, and shaking a purse in his ear.

Mrs. Maverick, Althea, and Mary Fleming saw this procession, as it streamed past under the windows, up to Market Hill, where a bonfire had been prepared.

Mrs. Maverick was loud in expressions of concern—in which disapproval of General Arnold's manner of deserting his colours was oddly mixed up with hopes, that now the rebels would see they could not trust their own leaders, and would listen to His Majesty's gracious terms.

Althea stood, half concealed by the window-curtain, looking down on this terrible spectacle, with a face so pale and stern that the good old lady refrained from addressing her, and inwardly reflected that she should never understand her. It was of course a most shocking, dreadful thing—though Major André could not be seriously in danger—but to look at Althea, one would think either that he had been her lover, or else that General Arnold had deserted from our cause instead of coming over to it.

She was still more surprised when, after Mary had gone

home—her father had come round to fetch her, as the streets were so disorderly, and had stayed some time, talking of the latest reports—Althea suddenly threw herself on her knees before her, laid her head in her lap, and burst out crying.

“Good heavens! my dear child, what is it?” said the old lady, much alarmed. What if Althea had been interested in Major André after all? Women did inexplicable things sometimes; was it possible that she had accepted Colonel Fleming out of compassion?

“What is it, dear child?” she asked, caressing her very tenderly. “Sure you can tell me, you know ’twould be sacred.”

“There’s nothing to tell, dear Cousin,” sobbed Althea. “Only the dishonour of it all.”

“Tut, tut! there’s no dishonour except to General Arnold,” said Mrs. Maverick briskly. “I suppose he will always be looked down on as a turncoat, for running off in this way—especially as he has somehow or other left poor Major André to bear the brunt. But they’ll exchange him, of course. Sir Henry seems to me to have mismanaged the business dreadfully; but of course something will be done at once to get Major André released—and I aint sure but the affair may perhaps produce a good effect on the rebels in the end.”

CHAPTER XCVIII.

THE ONLY WAY.

NOEL did not fairly awake till past noon. He was very weak, but quite himself. He spoke calmly of Major André, and begged Jasper to go and see what news there was.

As Jasper was leaving his quarters, Tallmadge came up.

“You have heard, I suppose?” he said, so gravely that Jasper read his news in his face.

“You mean he is found to be a spy?” he asked. “I was prepared for it of course——”

“There was no escape—the Board could have come to no other conclusion,” said Tallmadge, interrupting him. “But ’tis shocking to think of such a fate befalling so amiable a young fellow. They say the members of the Board were deeply affected—his very judges wept for him, though they may not spare him. Nature never made him for a spy—he’s too frank

and ingenuous. Every heart bleeds for him. But, shocking as 'tis, I see 'tis inevitable; not to make an example would be to offer impunity to treason."

Tallmadge spoke with the tears in his eyes, and added that he felt it in a peculiar degree, having been the main instrument of his ruin—since had he not prevailed on Colonel Jamieson to send for him back, he would doubtless have made good his escape with Arnold.

"He wants to see you," he continued. "I mentioned the other day that you was here, and he has been asking for you ever since. I was this morning at headquarters, and told His Excellency of his request, and here is the order to admit you."

They were going along towards the village of Tappan.

"He's pretty calm," continued Tallmadge. "Yesterday, on his return from appearing before the Board, he wrote to Sir Henry Clinton, and as he was doing it, he burst into tears, and said that what grieved him most was the fear lest Sir Henry might reproach himself with having allowed him to come into this dreadful position. He let me see what he'd wrote—'twas a most affecting letter—entirely exonerating Clinton from blame."

Major André was confined in an old stone mansion on the main street. When they had nearly reached the door, Jasper begged Major Tallmadge to turn back with him a little way—he did not, he said, feel sufficiently master of himself to go in that moment.

"Perhaps you think, Fleming," says Tallmadge, turning back instantly, and linking his arm in Jasper's, "that I show a heartless composure to be able to talk thus, but I've been with him near a week now, and I suppose one gets a little hardened."

As Tallmadge was all the while on the verge of tears, the hardening process had certainly not gone far with him.

"I trust I should have acted as I did, had I known who 'twas I was fetching back, and what the consequences must be to him," he continued presently. "But I'm glad I did not know; a man is in a terrible strait when his public duty is on one side, and his private feelings on the other. But how I shall go through with it I know not—he has made me promise to be with him to the last, and unless they grant his request as to the mode of his death, I know not how I shall endure to see his end."

Tallmadge then told his friend that Major Hamilton (whose

sympathies, like every one else's, had been warmly excited for the prisoner), had actually proposed to His Excellency to offer to exchange Major André for Arnold! His Excellency, while never for a moment believing such a proposal would be complied with by Sir Henry Clinton, had nevertheless consented to let the bearer of the report of the trial communicate it verbally, in such a manner as that it should be certain to reach Sir Henry.

"How they must loathe Arnold!" said Tallmadge. "'Tis a just retribution, so far as they are concerned, to see themselves compelled to sacrifice André for his sake—for of course Hamilton's idea is wild—indeed, he says himself he knows it is inadmissible, except as an indirect suggestion. 'Twas, I can't help fancying, in reality prompted by an enthusiastic notion on Hamilton's part, that the traitor himself might be struck with remorse, and come back of his own accord."

* * * * *

The old 'Seventy-six stone house was closely guarded. Besides the sentries, two officers were pacing up and down in the entrance hall, with naked swords.

Jasper found Major André—who had just received the necessities he had written for to General Robertson, and was dressed in uniform—sitting at a small table, covered with writing materials. He was sketching at the moment, but two or three unfinished letters lay on the table or the floor. Two officers (by General Washington's express command) sat guarding him with their swords drawn. André threw down his pen, and rose as Jasper entered.

"The last time we met, Colonel Fleming, was in a very different scene," he said, with a sorrowful smile, as he came forward to greet him. "Brief as was our acquaintance, I have ever since hoped we might meet again; but I little thought 'twould be thus."

Jasper, painfully constrained, knew not what reply to make, but said that he trusted Major André was receiving all the attention he required; and begged to know if he could be of use to him in any way.

"Only," says André—with one of those pathetic smiles which had touched the hearts of all his jailers—"Only by coming here to cheer one of the few hours which remain to me. There is, I suppose, no hope that General Washington will listen to Sir Henry's representations? He denies, I hear, the right of General Arnold to grant me a pass under the circumstances,

and that was the only way in which I could have been saved."

"There is one other way," said Jasper, seeing that André waited for him to speak. "The way Major Hamilton proposed,—for I fancy it came from him, though his sense of honour is too delicate for him to have suggested to you to mention it to Sir Henry Clinton. But it is, I know, to be suggested to him indirectly."

"And that——?" asked André, but as though he already guessed the answer.

"Is that General Arnold should be given up to die in your place?"

"'Tis impossible!" cried André, flushing scarlet. "As a man of honour, Colonel, you must see 'twould be impossible!"

"Impossible, I grant you, for Sir Henry to deliver him up," returned Jasper. "But not perhaps wholly impossible for Arnold to return—as the one only way remaining to expiate an everlasting infamy."

"He would never do it—men who do what he has done don't immolate themselves," said André sadly.

"He is not quite a common traitor," said Jasper. "'Tis just possible he may find he cannot endure the weight of the universal contempt he will meet with—but 'tis unlikely. As you say, traitors commonly save themselves."

"But at least," said André, nervously making random strokes with the pen he had taken up again,—“at least I trust my request may be complied with, and that the manner of my death may become a soldier?"

And as Jasper did not reply, André asked him point-blank what he thought would be General Washington's decision? What was said about it?

"I know nothing," replied Jasper, thankful that he could say so. "I have scarce left my brother's room these two days, and have heard nothing."

On this André courteously inquired after Major Branzholm, and was informed that he had taken these unhappy events so much to heart, as to become seriously indisposed.

It was a relief when Major André left these painful topics to speak of the past.

"I believe I should congratulate you, Colonel Fleming," he said, looking at Jasper—who, throughout this most distressing interview could seldom bear to meet those boyish blue eyes,

full of wistful appeal from a shameful doom. "You have, I believe, gained the affections of a lady for whom I have so high a respect, that 'tis with compunction I mention her here."

"She will be deeply concerned to hear of what has happened," said Jasper. "'Tis almost impossible I can express the grief it gives me, without at the same time saying what must wound you. I know 'twill be a great shock to Miss Digby——"

"Her brother might—if he had chose—have come on this errand," says André after a moment. "Sir Henry offered him to go, but he declined; and the chief reason he gave was that if he should chance to meet you, he was sure his looks would betray him. He's an honest fellow." André said this half-absently as he spoke, studying the effect of a sketch he had been making.

"I see you are sorry for me, Colonel," he went on, glancing at Jasper, and striving to repress his emotion. "I've received so much kindness that it makes it harder to maintain the stoicism my position demands. To die on a gibbet, I confess, demands almost more than I am master of."

Jasper could not speak.

"Come, Colonel Fleming," said André, for the moment perfectly collected. "Fred Digby used to tell me you was a philosopher, and a philosopher should remember we must all die sooner or later. I thought you was a greater Stoic than I; and if, while you stood frowning at our frivolities in Philadelphia, some one had told me that you would one day be shedding tears at my fate, I'm certain I wouldn't have believed it."

"God knows I'm no Stoic," said Jasper, "and if you fancied I frowned, 'twas chiefly at some thoughts of my own which were just then greatly troubling me."

André sighed. "It is by an odd coincidence that you and I meet at this pass," he said after a moment's silence. "Tell Miss Digby her brother refused this errand. From her last conversation with me, I happen to know 'twill please her to hear it. If she ever tells you anything of what I said then, you will only have to remember to-d-y to forgive me."

CHAPTER XCIX.

A SOLDIER'S DEATH.

Do not therefore
Ascribe the perturbation of my soul
To a servile fear of death.

THE UNNATURAL COMBAT.

THAT night, Captain Aaron Ogden of the New Jersey line was sent to Paulus Hook, with an official account of Major André's trial for Sir Henry Clinton. His Excellency bade him upon his way call at the Marquess La Fayette's quarters for further instructions—the Marquess commanding the Light Infantry at the point nearest to the British lines. The Marquess accordingly instructed Ogden to arrive late at Paulus Hook, get asked to stop the night, and in the course of conversation tell the Captain of the Guard about that one only way whereby André could be saved.

It all fell out as His Excellency had planned ; and as soon as Ogden had observed that he was pretty certain that that exchange (though no other) would be accepted, the Captain of the Guard slipped out, and, crossing the river, told Sir Henry, who, late as it was, was holding a council. But no one could have soberly imagined it possible that he could give up General Arnold to the vengeance of his enemies. It has been said that Arnold, in an agony of remorse at André's danger, exclaimed that he would go back and die. But he did not insist on going ; and if he had, he would have placed Sir Henry in the vilest dilemma in which ever commander found himself.

He was already in a cruel strait. His hands were tied, and he would have been covered with ridicule, if the tragedy had not been so terrible that only the Devil himself could have laughed at it. But he did his best—though Fred Digby always maintained that Sir Henry was a d——d poor hand at a rescue. He wrote an urgent letter to General Washington—couched in terms as respectful as though he had been addressing a Marshal of France ; and he sent old General Robertson (Miss Digby's particular aversion in former days, but a person of consequence), and with him the Lieutenant-Governor of the city, and Mr. Smith, the Chief-Justice—brother to Joshua, now awaiting

his own trial for complicity in Arnold's plot—to Dobbs' Ferry, to confer with General Greene, and try to persuade him to admit their plea—that Major André, being furnished with a pass from General Arnold, could not legally be considered a spy. They were also to offer in exchange for him any one whom General Washington might be pleased to name.

They came up to Dobbs' Ferry in the *Greyhound*, and with them Colonel Beverley Robinson. Only General Robertson was permitted to land. He conferred long with Greene—urging everything he could think of, and offering everything but the one thing which could not be offered—entreating finally that the case might be referred to Rochambeau and Knyphausen.

But Greene was immovable. The prisoner had confessed that he brought no flag, and by all the laws of war he must die. Among Robertson's arguments was an insolent letter from Arnold, in which the traitor threatened a bloody retaliation if André were harmed. But Greene only flung down the letter at the old General's feet, and could hardly be induced to carry it to His Excellency.

Five o'clock on Sunday afternoon had been fixed for the execution, and a vast concourse assembled at that hour on a hill a little way out of Tappan—whereon the night before the gibbet had been set up. But the conference at Dobbs' Ferry was so long, that the execution was deferred till to-morrow. General Washington was waiting to see whether Benedict Arnold would come to redeem the prisoner.

Except to visit Major André a second time (at his particular request), Jasper never left his brother that day. Noel's fever had abated, but he was too weak to rise from his bed, and was in a pitiable state of exhaustion of body and mind. Although he never said so in so many words, he hoped to the very last that Arnold would expiate his treason by returning, when he learned that this was the only way of saving André. "Surely," he thought, as his memory went back to the march to Quebec and the battles at Saratoga—"surely, when he sees how low he has fallen and remembers what he once was, he must feel such unutterable tortures, that death itself will seem preferable."

"I cannot understand it!" he exclaimed piteously. "'Tis too monstrous—too unnatural—it were better never to have been born. Oh, Jasper! how can a man bring dishonour on a good name? Think of it, brother—the infamy of it lasts from generation to generation! A name too that would else have

been remembered with so much honour! 'Tis thought contrary to nature that a man should kill himself—but what's that to covering himself with shame?—to be remembered only as a traitor? And 'tis so easy to be faithful—merely faithful. A dog may be so! One may be unfortunate, mistaken—anything—but not false. Surely, surely, dear brother, the shame of it will kill him?"

"I fear not, or he had never brought himself to do it," said Jasper; "but, you may be sure, his punishment will be terrible, and that it has begun already. The opportunity for a great expiation has been given him—perhaps Heaven's last act of grace to a man who had some great qualities in him; but do not, dear brother, let yourself indulge the hope that he will embrace it. He would have returned instantly, if his treason had left him with honour enough ever to return at all."

"Ah, dear Jasper!" said Noel with a heart-breaking sigh; "if you had seen him as I have, you would, I think, be with me almost ready to reproach Heaven itself for having permitted him to be lost! He was deeply wronged; but now even that will be forgot! Oh, brother! what are all other griefs and misfortunes to those we can inflict on ourselves? To be a mark for everlasting contempt! Sure he must wish he could cease to be! He has slain his own fame. You cannot feel it as acutely as I—you was not with him as I was——"

"Do I not feel it?" exclaimed Jasper—tears of sharp pain starting from his eyes, and his face quivering. "He has not only brought infamy on his own name—he has spoiled some of the most glorious pages of his country's story! Those great deeds we were all so proud of—we shall almost choose to have them forgot, lest some one should remind us that he who did them was afterwards a traitor!"

Jasper was sorry he had allowed these bitter words to escape him, as soon as he had uttered them. They cut Noel to the quick.

"'Tis true," he said, with a groan of anguish, his eyes fixed on Jasper's with a look of despair; "and some of his dishonour will cling to me, and to all those whose names are joined with his."

"No, no! there can be no dishonour in merely having been deceived," cried Jasper, wringing his brother's hand as it lay on the bedclothes. "These are morbid imaginations, dear boy—dismiss them! Your faithfulness does but shine the

brighter against his falseness ! But if a good man is an honour to his country, a traitor must be owned to be a disgrace ; I meant no more. No shadow can ever fall on you—such as you was never yet a traitor since the world stood. Malice itself could not suspect you !”

“ You think so, because you love me,” said Noel sadly. “ Why should I not be suspected ? Now he has proved false, who is to be trusted ? ”

“ Most of us, I hope ! ” said Jasper confidently. “ Look back ; how few traitors have there been, and of what sort were they ? Human nature is weak enough, God knows, but great baseness is much less common than great goodness—’tis more conspicuous, that’s all—as one fire can light up a whole horizon. And—I would not say it to you before, dear boy, lest I should seem to triumph over you—but there was nothing in Arnold to make it so impossible he should be a traitor.”

“ Oh, brother ! such valour—such resolve,” says Noel, protesting.

“ Valour is a God-like quality, and so is resolution,” said Jasper. “ The man that dares not venture even his life when his duty and honour demand it, is a poor creature—not worthy to be called a man. Yet there’s a higher courage than that which can rush on in the heat of battle. ’Tis a harder task to stand still—to endure misrepresentation—to hear others extolled at our expense. How many times do you not think Washington has resisted the temptation to risk all on one cast, and silence his detractors by a hero’s death ? Yet, once only—in despair at the cowardice of those dastards at Knipp’s Bay—he forgot that he had not the right to die.” Jasper said this with much heat ; but he could never speak of Washington without being moved.

“ Then for resolution,” he went on more calmly. “ Weakness is, I own, a kind of wickedness—perhaps the worst kind, on the whole ; ’tis certainly the most dangerous, because we are apt to think it harmless ; but strength is like a sword, good or bad, according to the use we put it to. ’Tis a dangerous thing to put glory first. There’s no safety but in being more desirous to do our duty, than to be praised for the doing of it.”

“ I remember you said once you feared he was too ambitious,” observed Noel after a pause. “ Yet I’ve often heard you say, no good man could be insensible to the praise of other good men. He was, I’m sure, sensible enough to it, and to

have lost it will destroy him. The thought of André suffering through him, will be enough to embitter every hour of his existence. If he lets André die, he is lost beyond redemption !”

Jasper's second interview with Major André was if possible more painful than the first. He had by this time abandoned all hope of life, and was now chiefly agitated by anxiety concerning the mode of his death. On this subject he had written to General Washington in a strain of pathetic dignity which no one will ever read unmoved, so long as misfortune borne with gentleness and fortitude can touch the hearts of men.

At this last interview, André spoke of his old, only love—this news would grieve her, he said, smiling sadly. He did not know that she was dead—had died six months ago. Death was merciful to her.

“I have one last request to make you, Colonel Fleming,” he said, as they took leave of each other. “I hope—I believe—that General Washington will grant me a soldier's death—but in any case, I shall esteem it an act of great kindness on your part if I see you to-morrow at the place where I am to die.”

He was holding the Colonel's hand as he spoke ; he retained it, as he added, looking fixedly at Jasper, who was obliged to turn his head away, a little to conceal his emotion,—

“Yours will be, I think, the only face which a week ago was not strange to me.”

“I will be there,” said Jasper, “since you wish it——”

He could not utter another word, and Tallmadge, who was in the room, was sobbing audibly.

“I see I must set you all an example of fortitude,” says André in a somewhat unsteady voice. Then he wrung Jasper's hand, and, abruptly turning away, sat down at the table, and seemed as though he would resume his writing ; but long after Colonel Fleming had left him, he sat with one hand shading his eyes, while with the other he idly traced lines which he erased as soon as they were written.

On his way out, Jasper passed two little dwarfish fellows—servants of Major André, who had been permitted to come to him from New York. They were in tears, and one of them, when he saw Colonel Fleming come out, implored him to say if nothing could be done to save their master? Was it true the gibbet was set up already? The Colonel's agitation was sufficient answer to their fears, but he replied that if it was so,

he had not seen it; and returned to his quarters so much affected that it was a long while before he felt himself calm enough to go in to Noel, who was awaiting him in an agony of impatience.

As the time approached for the execution, Noel's anguish rose almost to distraction.

"Is it possible, brother," he asked, "for a man that was not born a monster to wait and see another man die a shameful death by his fault? If he does it, he is no better than a common murderer!"

A little before noon next day, Major André set out on his last journey. All the general officers then in camp—except His Excellency and his staff—followed General Greene, who led the way. Then came a guard of five hundred men, and in the midst of them a wagon with a coffin in it. Just behind the wagon walked the prisoner. He leaned on the arms of the two Captains especially appointed to guard him; but his step was as light as though he had been going on parade, and it was noticed that he kept time to the band, which played a lively tune. He was dressed in full uniform, except that of course he wore no sword, or sash, or gorget. In his bright scarlet coat faced with green, his buff waistcoat, and small-clothes, with his hair carefully dressed in a long queue, he appeared the least mournful figure there.

All the way was lined with people, who saw him pass with grave and pitying faces. One little girl, suddenly stepping out of the crowd, thrust a bag of fresh-gathered peaches into his hand. He smiled and thanked her, and carried them a little way; but he was come to that hour when the grasshopper is a burden, and he was presently glad to give them to some one near him.

He had received no reply to his letter. General Washington had, it was said in camp, been disposed to yield; but Greene had insisted that if Major André was not a spy, he had incurred no penalty whatever. If they did not hang him, they ought to let him go—there could be nothing between. And so, as his request could not be granted, His Excellency had thought it both more proper and more merciful not to reply at all.

André talked as he went, and betrayed no sign of discomposure, until, at the foot of the ascent which led up to the

appointed place, he came in sight of the gallows. As he saw this symbol of ignominy rising up high into the clear blue air, his countenance fell.

"Gentlemen, I am disappointed!" he said. "I expected my request would have been granted!"

As they came near the gallows-foot, he looked round, and bowed to those officers standing by whom he knew—among them was Colonel Fleming, who, as he returned this last salute, had still ringing in his ears his brother's despairing cry, that if Arnold let Major André suffer in his stead, he was lost beyond redemption.

Honourable men cannot help attributing some lingering sentiment of honour even to the basest. In spite of all reason and probability Jasper found himself nervously starting at a slight movement in the vast crowd which made a living wall around the ground; he knew it was madness to think of it, and yet he involuntarily conjured up a vision of a horseman furiously galloping up the hill—tearing his way through the crowd—and only drawing rein at the foot of the gallows.

But there was nothing; the crowd had closed up again, Jasper sternly told himself that traitors do not come back to die. He had never expected that Arnold would come back, but that instant's illusion brought the horror of the treason before him as though he had never even yet fully realised it. But for his promise to André, he would have fled from the place, that he might not behold what was to come.

Meanwhile, the wagon had been driven under the gallows. André, halting a few yards from it, once more looked round—perhaps he too had dreamed of that horseman coming to die in his stead! Then, as the guard fell in, and the hangman stood ready, he bowed his head a little, and looked down at himself, rolling over a stone the while with his foot, biting his lips, and shaking his head, as though he were thinking,—“This surely is not the fruit that grows on gallows-trees!”

He was rather pale—except for a small flush which came and went on his left cheek. For a moment or two he seemed to struggle with a choking in his throat, but he betrayed no confusion; and when, all being ready, the commanding officer desired him to mount the wagon, he shook hands with Tallmadge and the rest—who were all in tears—and, going to the back of the wagon, laid his hand on the side, and made as though he would spring up into it. But the shadow of the

gibbet lay on it, and he faltered, and did not take the leap, but climbed up, and stood there, beside his coffin—while all the people held their breath. There was silence so deep, that if that horseman had been on his way, they could have heard him coming.

While André stood thus, the commanding officer (it was Colonel Scammell, the Deputy-Adjutant-General) read the order of execution.

Major André had stepped upon the coffin, and paced it out once—then, standing still, his hands resting on his hips, he let his eyes roam over the wide landscape and the wider blue sky—looking high above that grim bridge of the gallows which spanned it—and the vast silent multitude, come there to see him die.

So he stood, while Colonel Scammell (the sun flashing on his drawn sword, as he sat on his horse close beside the wagon) read from the paper in his hand.

“Major André,” says Scammell, when the reading is over, “if you have anything to say, you can speak now, for you have but a short time to live.”

Major André uncovers, and bows as he replies,—

“I have nothing more to say, gentlemen, but this—you all bear me witness that I meet my fate as a brave man.”

Then he gives his hat to his weeping servant, and takes the halter from the hangman—who has let his beard grow and blackened his face to disguise his identity—and puts it over his head, first unpinning his stock and shirt-collar. He draws the knot close under his ear, and has already blindfolded his own eyes, with a white handkerchief which he took from the pocket of his coat—when Scammell says aloud that his arms must be bound. On this, Major André takes off the handkerchief while he finds another—not losing his calmness even at this cruel moment—and then replacing it, has this time seen his last of earthly sights.

The hangman bound his arms behind him—the only office he had been permitted to perform—and, getting off the wagon, went to his horse's head.

There was an awful silence, and then Scammell let his sword fall—the signal agreed upon—and the wagon was driven off, so suddenly, that there was no struggle.

After the first tremendous swing, the quivering rope slowly

grew still. Long after that, the multitude stood in death-like silence, not one of all that vast assembly stirred or spoke (or so at least it seemed) for full half an hour. At the end of that time, with every precaution of decency and respect, the body was cut down and laid in the coffin.

CHAPTER C.

ALTHEA SURRENDERS.

"AND Arnold lives!" said Tallmadge in Jasper's ear, as the multitude, still hushed and awe-stricken, began slowly to disperse. "Will you say now, Fleming, that the ways of Providence are just?"

To which Jasper replied by asking him almost fiercely whether he would choose rather to be Benedict Arnold, or to be hanged to-morrow?

No investigation revealed any more than was already known of Arnold's plot. All the officers connected with his command were fully acquitted of any knowledge of his designs. An impenetrable mystery still surrounds his treason. We do not know when or by what means he made his first overtures to Sir Henry Clinton. André, so frank and unreserved otherwise, on these points maintained an inviolate silence. In a note in his own hand, made in his copy of Stedman's History, Sir Henry merely says that he had been "about eighteen months" in correspondence with Arnold. Allowing for the vagueness of this statement, we may probably conclude that Arnold's treason dated from the attack made upon him by the Executive Council of Pennsylvania, and the final refusal of Congress to pass his accounts. But all the actors in this dark story seem to have agreed to tell as little as possible. Even conjecture is very meagre on the subject, and can only show us as the possible go-between, a certain lieutenant of the British Army who was in Philadelphia during part of the year 1779, and who had been suspected of being a spy.

The most searching inquiries failed likewise to establish the guilt of Joshua Smith, who persisted in his first assertion, that he had acted in good faith, believing that General Arnold's mysterious visitor brought him information from the enemy.

But though Smith saved his neck, very few of his countrymen believed he was as innocent as he professed to be.

General Branzholm, who was stationed at Dobbs' Ferry, came down to Tappan several times to see his son ; and as soon as the formal acquittal was pronounced, insisted on his asking for leave and going to Philadelphia, where his mother then was. General Branzholm expected to be ordered south with his brigade—as it was essential to immediately check Lord Cornwallis's progress, and he promised Noel an appointment on his own staff. This prospect somewhat roused Noel from the apathetic dejection into which he had fallen, and he set out for Philadelphia with his brother—who had also obtained a short leave of absence—not wholly unable to look forward to the future.

"I must begin again," he said to Jasper, as they were on their journey. "I see him wherever I look. I shall never care to speak of Quebec or Saratoga again, since I can never do so without remembering him, and knowing that every one else is thinking of him too."

Noel insisted on arriving after dark ; he could not, he said, endure to be recognised as he rode through the streets. So it was late when they drew up at the Slate-Roof House.

They found Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence Fleming and Mary all there. Jasper and Noel were expected, but it was not known when they would arrive, and the Flemings had come to ask for news of them.

Mrs. Branzholm took Noel away, before Mrs. Fleming had time to make many pious reflections on the depravity of our hearts and the danger of setting up idols.

"Your father has wrote me all about it," she said, when they were alone. "I understand it all ; you need not tell me what you've felt, I felt it all for you. But no one can cast any reproach on you, my dearest boy, and I hope you never doubted but your mother would still be as proud of you as ever."

It was for the capacity to feel and speak thus on trying occasions, that Mrs. Branzholm's sons thought her the noblest of mothers. As a housekeeper, and in everyday matters, Mrs. Fleming was a much more admirable person ; but when Mary's heart ached or her courage failed her, it was to her aunt that she went—knowing that whenever things went wrong, Mrs. Branzholm could show something not far below heroism. She

even allowed Noel to talk about his heart being broken, and there being nothing left to live for, without more than the very gentlest of reproaches, and (though she herself was almost heartbroken at the thought of it) she forced herself to speak cheerfully of the coming Southern campaign, in which he would serve under his own father.

Jasper had sent a message to Althea that he was in Philadelphia, and would come to see her early in the morning.

Mary had prepared him to find her deeply distressed at all that had happened, but he was shocked when he saw how wan she looked.

"My darling girl!" he exclaimed, as he kissed her; "what have you done? you are so pale——"

At the moment, however, Althea was not pale. The blood had rushed painfully to her face—her eyes were full of tears.

"Oh, Jasper!" she said, and then with a great sigh she let her head sink on his shoulder, and stole her hand into his.

"I knew you would feel it most acutely," he said in a low voice. "Believe me, dear, I understand and share your feelings."

"You cannot know how I have felt the dishonour of it," she said after a pause. Then, lifting up her head, she seemed to be going to say more, but could not.

"I must say it," she said presently, gently putting him a little from her, but letting her right hand rest on his shoulder. She hung her head, her colour came and went, and she spoke with a painful effort.

"I do not know how to say it," she began. "Yet I owe it you. 'Tis perhaps a foolish woman's reasoning, but I've thought much about what has happened—there's a baseness in it, which makes me think there's been something wrong at the foundation of our dealings. I am ashamed, Jasper—my cousin Maverick does not understand it—she thinks 'tis base to be a traitor, but no shame to try to profit by one. She calls me high-flown, when I say I can scarce look you in the face——"

Jasper was beginning a passionate protestation, but she stopped him.

"There's more I must say"—she hid her face on his shoulder as she said it. "I told you I could not feel 'twas right we should be happy until these troubles were over—but now—if you wish it——"

"If! If I wish it, Althea!" he cried, snatching her to

him. Althea had expected Jasper to receive this gracious announcement with pleasure—and even with gratitude—but he showed such extreme emotion, that she could not help telling him that if she had known he desired it so much as this, she did not think her resolution could have held firm.

On this, Jasper confessed to having been tormented by a superstitious fancy that he would die before the time came when Althea would consent to marry him. This fancy, he said, had pursued him from the first moment of his happiness.

“I went away with the full conviction of it,” he said; “and that first night after I left you, when I found out that the Marquess was to be surprised, I thought my presentiment was to be fulfilled instantly. Even three weeks ago, when we were crossing the Hudson, and were all so puzzled at seeing the *Vulture* venture so high up the river, I imagined my time was coming. I had planned it all out—there would be an attempt made to capture His Excellency as he went to see the Count—and the utmost I hoped for was to fall in his defence. So do we multiply our real pains with fanciful ones, as though those which we cannot avoid were not enough!”

Jasper laughed as he confessed to this weakness, and added that since Althea had promised to marry him at once, he felt sure he should live to be a hundred. Althea, however, took it very seriously, and protested she could not forgive herself for having, though unknowingly, caused him so much pain. But it was, she said, a just punishment, that, having so often intentionally grieved him, she should have been condemned to go on doing it, when what she most desired in the world was to make him happy. But Jasper would not let her utter these self-reproaches—he vowed she was more cruel to herself than she had ever been to him, and said that he believed he was given to torment himself, and should doubtless have found some other way of doing it, if he had not had this.

“We must all die one day,” he added; “but I have had a great desire to live to call you my wife.”

Jasper’s confession so wrought upon Althea, that she allowed him to hurry on their marriage with so little delay, that there was not even time for her to have a new gown made. Mrs. Maverick said such a thing was unheard of, and asked what Mrs. Theodosia would say when she came to hear of it? She would certainly think we was a parcel of savage barbarians!

But Althea observed that she might think what she pleased

—if Jasper did not mind an old gown, it was a very small matter what Cousin Theo might choose to say. Whereupon Jasper hastened to protest that it would be ridiculous to delay the marriage on such an account—adding as his own conviction that no gown could possibly be more becoming than the one which Althea had on at that moment.

Fred's letter reached his sister in the midst of her hasty preparations for her marriage. Colonel Fleming was exceedingly gratified at the way in which Fred expressed himself towards him, and said it was but one more item of the great debt he owed him.

"I can never forget his generous kindness when he came to me in Boston jail," he said, much moved—and this time Althea did not resent the allusion. "He has a heart that yields to every generous impulse, and is as tender as he is brave."

"Ah, Jasper," said Althea sadly, "when I compare his behaviour with my own I cannot forgive myself! When you was away, the remembrance of it tortured me. You, I fear, must often have recalled it."

"If I did," he said, "'twas only as a man will sometimes suffer over again in his dreams the pangs of a wound that has long since healed. Do not reproach yourself—the cruellest part was not your doing. The struggle I had with myself was far harder. The event is better than my fears, but I can never cease to wish that I had not been my brother's rival."

* * * * *

The wedding was as quiet as possible, the only persons present, not of the family, being two old friends of Mrs. Maverick's, who lived in Philadelphia. Jasper had felt some delicacy about Noel; but to his infinite relief, as soon as Noel heard that the day was fixed, he said that as Mary was to be Althea's bridesmaid he hoped his brother would accept him for his groomsmen; and he performed his part—if somewhat gravely—in a manner which every one said was admirable. Not that there was very much to do, since the ceremony took place in Mrs. Maverick's own drawing-room; but, as she remarked afterwards, it would have been very easy to make everybody uncomfortable, whereas Major Branhholm made it all go off easily.

In spite of Colonel Fleming's flattering opinion of her everyday gown, Althea put on the silver brocade to be married in (it was of the very best material, and still looked as good as new); and the Colonel admitted that he had been wrong—the

brocade being even more becoming than the other. He added that he believed he had seen it before, and had then thought it remarkably becoming.

"It must have been at the Mischianza then, Colonel Fleming," says Mrs. Maverick, "for I've never been able to get her to wear it since."

Althea had repaired the torn ruffle so cunningly, that no one but Mrs. Maverick would have noticed there was anything the matter with it. Mrs. Maverick must needs (before the whole wedding party) call Mrs. Branhholm's attention to the darn, as a monument of skill—whereupon Althea gave Jasper a look in which smiles and tears contended for the mastery. Mrs. Branhholm vowed she should never have had the patience to do anything so exquisite; and Colonel Fleming himself requested to see it, and, having gravely examined the ruffle, had the malice to protest he thought the darn rather improved the effect than otherwise. This, as Mrs. Maverick told him, was perfectly preposterous, and only showed that he did not understand the value of the lace.

There was a friendly contest between General Branhholm and Mr. Fleming, as to who should give away the bride; but the General finally established his own pretensions on the score of there being some kind of connection between the Digbys and the Randolphs—who, being undoubtedly related to the Branhholms, brought Miss Digby at once into their family circle.

This matter being amicably arranged, nothing further occurred worth recording. Mrs. Branhholm cried one moment and laughed the next; Mrs. Lawrence Fleming shook her head with a deal of feeling; and Mrs. Maverick took an opportunity to tell Colonel Fleming privately, that—whatever he might imagine to the contrary from Althea's refusing to marry him before—she could assure him that he would have a wife who adored him.

Jasper repeated this to Althea, who—instead of smiling, as he expected—said, with her eyes full of tears, that he would never know how much she loved him, and that it had often cut her to the heart to think how cold she must appear.

"You wrong yourself, my Althea," he replied very tenderly. "I have never known a moment's uneasiness, since you gave me that first kiss. How could I, when everything about you expressed nothing but tenderness? Your words have been kindness itself, but your looks and your manner have said far more

than your words. I've never asked you (but once) if you loved me, because there was no need."

"And I have asked you a hundred times if you was satisfied that I loved you," she said, "because my conscience told me how much right you had to doubt it. But if you could see my heart, you'd see far more love there than I can ever show."

* * * * *

Jasper took his bride home to Pine Street for the few days yet remaining of his leave, after which she accompanied him to the camp.

Mrs. Maverick chose to remain behind in Philadelphia. She had, she observed, gone a long way; but to find herself in the rebel camp (unless her duty called her there, as was the case with Althea), was going a step too far. If Mrs. Maverick appears unreasonable for talking thus so late in the day, it must be remembered in her excuse that the Provincial cause had seldom appeared more desperate than at this moment.

CHAPTER CI.

FINIS CORONAT OPUS.

THERE is much more to tell, but very little more can be told.

Althea spent the winter in camp at New Windsor. That winter was almost as severe as the last had been, and she endured many hardships—that is, she found out afterwards that she must have done so, for at the time she did not notice the fact particularly.

Noel went south with his father, when General Greene was appointed to succeed Gates. This was early in November. Greene had a fever hanging about him, and had intended to stay several days in Philadelphia; but Cornwallis was rapidly advancing towards Virginia, so Greene resolved to hurry on, with only a single day's delay, to see his wife, and take his leave of Washington—from whom all through the war he had never yet been separated.

General Greene's stay in Philadelphia was thus so short that Noel's farewells had to be said in haste. On the last day, Mrs. Branzholm went to beg Mary of her parents—she must, she said, have some one to keep her company after her husband

and Noel should be gone, until she went to join Jasper and Althea in winter quarters, which she had resolved to do.

Mrs. Branzholm had, however, another motive for desiring Mary's company. She was extremely uneasy lest the effect of past events on Noel's mind should make him unduly reckless; and, being endowed with a considerable portion of feminine shrewdness, had reflected that it could do no harm (and might do a great deal of good) if Mary gave him a talking-to on the subject. She imparted her fears to Mary, and easily obtained her promise to speak to him.

Mary took the first opportunity of their being alone.

"I have promised your mother, dear Noel," she said very gravely, "to remind you that, with so many people that love you, you ought not to have spoke as you did when you first came back. It has made us all very unhappy. I mean about your having nothing to live for. Think how much more terrible it will be for us to know you are gone to the field in such sentiments, and how doubly bitter the recollection of them would make it, if—if we was left to think you had perhaps cast your life away, out of a sort of despair."

The picture was too much for Mary; she burst into tears.

"Don't cry, Mary; I promise you I'll do nothing desperate! I'm sorry I ever said that—I don't mean it indeed!" said Noel, with great earnestness. Then he pulled Mary's hands from her face, and said hurriedly,—"There's one thing you could say, Mary, that would prevent my ever thinking such a thing again. If I thought 'twould make any difference to you whether I came back or not, and that I should not find you married to some coxcomb or other, not worthy of you—and I forgot——"

"You've no right and no cause to speak so, Noel!" says Mary, trying to seem angry. "You know very well it would make a difference."

"But how much, Mary? how much? Nay, I will see your face; look at me, and tell me how much difference 'twould make to you if I was never to come back?"

"Oh, how can you talk so?" sobs Mary. "You know very well that 'twould make all the difference in the world—that 'twould break my heart!"

"Then if I come back, shall I find you willing to put up with me? You always used to understand me, Mary, but I'm changed—perhaps now you'll not care——"

"Do you think so ill of me as to imagine I should care for you less when you was unhappy?" said Mary softly.

He drew her into his arms as he said,—

"Then if I come back, Mary, will it be to you? May I count on that?"

"One would think, to hear you," says Mary, "I was the greatest flirt in the world."

Noel contrived at last to get a more satisfactory reply than this, and with it he went away next day.

* * * * *

The fate of Major André made a profound sensation in England—though as little as possible was said about it publicly. The King made such poor amends as he could; he conferred a baronetcy on André's brother, and erected a monument to him in Westminster Abbey, with an inscription in which the nature of the service in which André perished, and the fate which befell him, are alike concealed beneath a decent veil of words. It was many a long year before the question of whether or no he came under the description of a spy could be approached with even the appearance of calmness; and many more before his death ceased to be called "the only blot on Washington's fame." His enemies had wept for him; his friends might be excused if they found it hard to be just. Many of us have stood before his monument in the Abbey. As one stands there, and thinks of André's story, those great words, Duty, Glory, and Honour, take a more solemn meaning, and treachery and infidelity are seen in all their hideous nakedness. It is said that Benedict Arnold was once seen standing there

* * * * *

John André died on the gallows—the most honourable man who ever went on a dishonourable errand; and Benedict Arnold, escaping Sergeant Champe and the Marquess La Fayette, lived to waste Virginia and burn New London. We may be sure the Devil never showed him *that* picture in his magic-lantern! It is now admitted that Arnold was not voluntarily guilty of the most frightful parts of it, but it is fit that he should disappear from his country's story amidst the flames of Fort Griswold.

We have forgotten him. But on the books of the Bank of England there is an entry in which the name of Benedict Arnold is set down over against part of the price for which he sold his soul; it will help witness against him, when all the

Books are opened, and every secret thing is brought to remembrance.

* * * * *
Noel Branzholm was in all Greene's Southern battles, and also witnessed Lord Cornwallis's surrender at Yorktown.

With Cornwallis's surrender the war was virtually ended, and the event certain—although for fifteen months longer a dribbling contest was kept up. Althea's eldest son was more than a year old, when at last the peace was signed, which acknowledged the Independence of the United States.

Long before that, Noel and Mary were married. Noel never entirely recovered from the shock of his discovering that his idolised commander was a traitor who had sold his country. His nature was too sweet to be embittered, but it was saddened, and much of its brightness was lost. At times, he would seem almost his old self, but at others he would fall into fits of melancholy, from which only Jasper could effectually arouse him. He could never quite divest himself of the fancy that some shadow of the dishonour clung about himself—nor was it altogether a fancy. So great was the abhorrence for Arnold's treason, that, if it had been possible, his countrymen would have rewritten their history, with all his great deeds left out.

Mary did not allow Noel to brood over these things in silence, as he was inclined to do. When she saw the dark mood coming over him, she would set the children to ask him to tell them the story of the march to Quebec—in which he never forgot to repeat how once, when his endurance had nearly failed, the vision of their mother, walking by the banks of the Chaudière, had put new life into him. That vision—illusion born of hunger and exhaustion as it was—was yet prophetic of the part which Mary was to play in his life.

But this was in future years, long after this story closes.

* * * * *
The eight years' struggle came to an end at last, and the United Provinces of North America took their place among the nations.

On the famous 4th of December, when General Washington took that brotherly farewell of his officers at Fraunces' Tavern, Jasper and Noel were both there. They were among the crowd of war-worn veterans who followed their General, along Broadway and down to Whitehall Ferry, and stood watching him (when they could see him for their tears), as he waved his

last farewells, until the point of the Battery shut him out from their sight.

Even then the brothers did not move. They stood there, arm in arm, until they were left almost alone.

"Surely," said Noel at last, as they also turned to depart,—
"surely, dear brother, this was well done, and our gains are a thousandfold more than our losses, let the croakers say what they will!"

"It was well done, brother," said Jasper; "for we could not have been men and done otherwise—but our hardest work is still before us—and to reckon up our loss and gain, we must wait a hundred years."

EPILOGUE.

MAJOR DIGBY was among the officers included in Lord Cornwallis's capitulation at Yorktown, but by the influence of Colonel Fleming and Major Branzholm, he was immediately permitted to go to Philadelphia on his parole. He there found his sister, and remained with her until Lord Cornwallis returned to England. He was on board the same vessel which carried his lordship, who had conceived a great regard for the honest young Major when he served under him in the South—but Fred's satisfaction at this was very considerably marred by the circumstance that General Arnold and his family were also on board, and by his lordship's being so civil to Arnold.

Lord Cornwallis (more fortunate than poor Burgoyne) was received favourably at court. He presented Major Digby to His Majesty, to whom he told the story of how the Major had tried to fetch succour to General Burgoyne.

Although, therefore, all hopes were over of any advantage accruing from those Virginian estates, which had proved such veritable "Castles in Spain," Major Digby had no such very great cause to rail at Dame Fortune—especially as she shortly let him know she had another favour in store for him.

One of the first things which Major Digby did on his return to England, was to go down into Northamptonshire, to fulfil poor Lieutenant Perkins's last injunctions. He was received by the simple-minded country parson's family as a great man indeed, and they thought they had performed an act of

amazing daring when they entreated him to stay a few days with them—sleeping, however, at the village inn, as there was not an inch to spare at the Vicarage.

Fred had to fight all his battles over again for these good people, who thought the *Gazette* not a patch upon him. There were many very affecting scenes in the course of these narrations—the saddest of all being told little by little, as each member of the family would take the Major aside, and ask him to tell them more about dear Will.

Having a most sympathetic and never-weary audience, the Major astonished himself by his own eloquence. His account of poor Major André melted them all to tears, from the Vicar himself to Susan—who, on hearing that the King had graciously received General Arnold, exclaimed indignantly that she wondered how His Majesty could abide the sight of him—and added, that, for her part, if she was poor Major André's brother, or any relation to him, she would tell General Arnold he was his murderer, and challenge him to a duel!

"Susan! Susan! these are very un-Christian sentiments!" says the Vicar reprovingly—at which Susan looked abashed, but not repentant.

"I fear, sir, we all felt pretty much the same," said Digby. "We was in a monstrous awkward position; we was obliged—that is, Sir Henry was—to treat him with a show of civility, but none of the Generals could abide acting with him, and Sir Henry was never quite sure of him. We was in a great dilemma as long as he was in our army; and now he's here, we don't know what the devil to do with him. I own I feel something like Miss Susan. The day his lordship was so kind as to present me I saw him at court—His Majesty was speaking to him before everybody—I thought I should have been sick! And poor General Burgoyne had the door shut in his face!"

Susan was grown up into a charming young woman, and as the poor Lieutenant had so particularly mentioned her, it was only natural that Fred should exert his memory to the utmost on her behalf. It was Susan who took him into the church, to show him that tablet to the captain slain at Minden, of which poor Will had spoken when he was dying. The Major was much affected on seeing it, and that evening, in a very neatly worded speech, requested permission of Mr. Perkins to take upon himself the placing of a similar memorial to his departed friend. He was aware, he said, with much feeling, that as a stranger to

them he had perhaps scarcely the right to make such a request ; but as having fought by Will's side, and been with him at the last, he trusted not to be refused.

"My dear sir," says the old gentleman—a venerable figure, with his long white hair and his threadbare cassock—"we must for ever be your debtors for what you have already done. I have been putting aside a certain sum each year, since my dear boy fell, for the purpose you name—but the lay-rector takes the great tithes—and I have been obliged to expend a considerable sum on a chimney which was blown down two years ago next Michaelmas ; and I have often feared I should not live to see my dear son's name recorded on those sacred walls within which I baptized him."

The Vicar said this with an old-fashioned dignity, which no mere report of his words can convey.

"I shall consider, sir," says Fred respectfully, "that I am permitted to show this mark of regard to my poor friend, and I thank you very kindly for the honour you do me. If you will be so good as to let me know any views you may have had, as to the way you would like it done, we will set about it at once."

Many were the discussions which followed. The Vicar was easy enough to satisfy as to the form of the tablet—indeed, it was Susan who finally decided that point, and the tablet was made from her drawing. But the Vicar took so much pains with the epitaph, that Fred despaired of the masons ever getting to work. He prepared at least a score, and it took all Susan's eloquence to persuade him not to insist on selecting a Latin one, in which there were undoubtedly many beautiful sentiments very chastely expressed.

"But, then, what's the good of it, if not a soul in the village can read a word of it?" urges Susan. "Dear father, do let it be in English—'twill perhaps inspire some of the village boys to serve their country."

"I believe on my conscience it might, daughter!" exclaims the Vicar, much struck with this suggestion ; "I will—yes, I will sacrifice what was after all perhaps a useless display of scholarship. (I had the prize for Latin verse when I was at Brasenose, Major Digby.) It shall be in English! This dear girl, Major Digby, has an astonishing good sense ; her mother and I frequently remark that you may see in her an old head on young shoulders. Bless me, where can I have put that rough draft? Ah, here it is! Now, Major Digby, if you will

kindly run your eye over that, I think you will find it a good groundwork on which to begin."

The Vicar produced a sheet of letter-paper, so scored and corrected, that the Major was obliged to ask assistance in deciphering it—indeed, it required the united efforts of himself, the Vicar, and Susan to make out to a certainty what was intended. When this was at last accomplished, and a fair copy made by Susan, the Major pronounced it to be an admirable production. It was to this effect:—

SACRED to the MEMORY
of

Lieutenant WILLIAM PERKINS, 29th Foot,
Third son of Gregory Perkins, M.A., Vicar of this Parish,
And Anne his wife.

He was born March 15, 1757, and entered the Army
At a very early age.

On the breaking out of the unhappy discontents
In our North American Colonies,
His Regiment was ordered to Boston.

He took part in the action of Bunker's Hill,
And was present during the whole of the operations
On Long Island and in New Jersey.

He accompanied the expedition from Canada
Under Lieut.-Gen. Sir John Burgoyne,
And died October 8, 1777,

Of wounds received the previous day,
In the Battle of Saratoga.

Thus ending a brief and blameless career,
In the performance of his duty to his
KING and Country.

This memorial is erected by his friend and comrade Major Digby,
To commemorate his virtues.

The last two lines were the production of Major Digby, and Susan thought them the most beautiful of all.

When the tablet was fixed in its place (it is in the chancel, just over the Vicar's pew, and exactly facing that of the captain who fell at Minden), Major Digby went down to see it. He had by this time been presented to the King—an honour which had procured him a second in the shape of a letter from Mrs. Theodosia, informing him that she was glad to hear of his safe return. Had heard that his sister (who was always a remark-

able wilful girl) had married a rebel Captain, who had been a cobbler, or something as low, before he turned rebel, but hoped it was not true. In any case, would be pleased if he would come down to Bath, and see an old woman who could not be long for this world. In a postscript, the writer added that she was to go to Bath the end of next week, and hoped to see him there on her arrival.

As Mrs. Theo had been saying she was not long for this world, ever since Fred could remember her, he was not rendered melancholy by this invitation—in fact, he set out for Northamptonshire, and, after travelling all night, got off the coach at the *Dragon of Wantley*, in excellent spirits. Having deposited his portmanteau and changed his dress, he presented himself at the Vicarage, where he was received with the utmost effusion by all but Susan, who was not there.

“Why, where is Miss Susan?” asks Major Digby, as soon as he perceives this omission. “Gone to make a drawing of the tablet? I’ll go and fetch her, and then I can see it myself.”

So saying, and disregarding all Mrs. Perkins’s representations that he had been all night on the coach, had probably taken nothing since he left Buckingham, and that it would be too dark to see anything in the church when he got there, the Major was off, promising to fetch Susan back in ten minutes’ time, and do justice to Mrs. Perkins’s hospitality.

The Major’s long legs soon brought him to the churchyard, whence a short cut among the grass-grown mounds, which marked where

“The rude forefathers of the hamlet slept,”

took him to the chancel door.

It stood ajar, and the Major, looking in, saw Susan sitting on a bench in the chancel, her bonnet lying on the floor beside her, her drawing-book in her hand. She seemed to be comparing what she had done with the original. It was a fine May evening, and a faint reflection fell on the tablet from the fast-setting sun, shining up into the roof through the west window at the farther end.

As he stood watching her, she let the book sink lower on her knees, and, getting out her pocket-handkerchief, began to carefully wipe up something, which Fred fancied might be a tear.

In endeavouring to ascertain this, he made a slight noise, at which Susan started, and let her book fall, as she jumped up in

a fright. There were tears in her eyes (which were blue and very like poor Will's), but there was a charming colour in her cheeks, as she exclaimed,—

"Oh, Major Digby, you frightened me to pieces! I wanted to finish this before you came, and mother said the coach was sure to be late."

"I thought there would be just time for me to see how the tablet looks," said Major Digby, picking up the book. Then he drew Susan's arm into his, and turned with her towards the chancel wall.

"How do you like it?" he asked as they stood in this confidential attitude.

"Oh——" said Susan, in a most eloquent monosyllable.

"I've been thinking a good deal lately," observed Fred—when he had conscientiously examined every letter of the inscription. "I've thought I'd ask you something—and I wanted to ask you here—just as we are now. It seems appropriate, as I first heard about you from poor Will. Do you think, Susan, as you could like me? I liked you the first minute ever I saw you."

When the Major returned with Susan (not more than half an hour later), her sisters instantly perceived that something had happened, and as instantly resolved to get it out of her at bedtime. But before then, Major Digby had requested an interview with the Vicar in his study, where he asked and obtained permission to pay his addresses to his daughter Susan. The Vicar called Susan in, to her great confusion, and solemnly blessed them both in good old-fashioned style.

Major Digby's adventures after he married Susan Perkins, though quite as interesting as anything that had yet befallen him, cannot here be so much as hinted at. It must suffice to say that Mrs. Theodosia did not leave him her money; but I never heard that either he or Susan allowed this disappointment to trouble them much. I believe, indeed, that he was more put out, when Lord George Germaine was made a Viscount, for his eminent services during the American War.

THE END.

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